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A SHORT
EXPOSITION
OF THE
TEN COMMANDMENTS,
EXTRACTED FROM
BISHOP HOPKINS.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
Late Fellow of Lincoln-College, OXFORD.

SECOND EDITION.

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EXPOSITION

OF THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS

EXTRACTED FROM

BISHOP HOPKINS.

BY JOHN WEBSTER, M. A.

Lecturer on the History of the Church of England.

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THE
P R E F A C E.

“ 1. **W**HOSOEVER will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he keep the catholic Faith :” that faith which is enjoyed by all the children of God, at all times and in all places. But still, *if I have all Faith, and have not Charity, that is, Love, I am nothing.* And if I have or seem to have, all Charity, yet *without holiness, I cannot see the Lord.* Without universal holiness, both of heart and life, I cannot see the face of God in glory. This is the purport of that solemn declaration, *In Christ Jesus*, in the christian dispensation, *neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love.* Or, (as the Apostle varies the expression) *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing ; but keeping the commandments of God.*

2. This manifestly refers to those ten words or commandments which God, in person, pronounced on Mount Sinai, and then wrote on two tables of stone, to be delivered down to his Church in all ages. These are no other than a Divine Compendium of the whole Duty of Man. These, when the Son of God *was made flesh*, he came not to destroy, but to fulfil. And not one jot or tittle of these shall pass away, till all things are fulfilled.

3. These, abundance of Writers have attempted to explain : but most of them in a dry and superficial manner. And even those who have penetrated deeper into their meaning, yet generally fail here : either they speak of faith and love, the soul of all the Commandments, slightly, and as it were, by the bye : or they

treat of them, as of any other *particular* Commandments, standing in the same rank with the rest. Perhaps Bishop Kenn alone, of all the late English writers, is clear of this charge : who has so beautifully resolved every Commandment into Love, and so strongly shewn, that this is *the fulfilling of the Law*. Yet even he is less explicit than might be desired on Faith, the foundation of the Law: the one foundation of the law written in the heart, without which we can neither love nor obey.

4. But this defect also is fully supplied by the labour of Bishop Hopkins. He has not only shewn, with the highest exactness, the true and the whole meaning of every Commandment, the literal and the spiritual meaning, in its length and breadth, its depth and height, but has continually built on the true foundation, living Faith in the Son of God, and continually pointed us to Love, the life, the soul, the end of every commandment. He shews these in their true point of view, not as two distinct Commandments, but as prevailing, influencing, enlivening, and perfecting the whole, without which all our Religion is a dead carcase. His Exposition, therefore, I can safely recommend to all that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ : and indeed to all that long to believe on him, that know and bewail their want of faith. The former, it may direct and *quicken in his Law* : the latter, it may, by the blessing of God, convince more deeply of the need they have to be washed in *the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness*.

JOHN WESLEY.

June 21, 1759.

EXPOSITION

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TEN COMMANDMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE manner wherein the law was delivered, is described to be very terrible and astonishing, in order to possess the people with greater reverence of it. For the greater majesty and solemnity of the action we read,

1. That the people were commanded to prepare themselves two days together, by a typical cleansing themselves from all external and bodily pollutions, before they were to stand in the presence of God; which signifies unto us two things, (1.) That we ought to be seriously prepared when we come to wait before God in his ordinances, and to receive a law at his mouth. Indeed the dispensation of the Gospel is not such a ministry of terror, as that of the Law was. God treats with us by his messengers and ambassadors; whose errand, though it be delivered with less terror, yet ought not to be received with less reverence; for it is God himself that speaks in and by them. (2.) If the Israelites were to sanctify and prepare themselves to appear before God at Mount Sinai, how much more ought we to sanctify ourselves, that we may be meet to appear before him in heaven?

2. The Mount on which God appeared was to be fenced and railed in, with a strict prohibition, that none should presume to pass the bounds there set them, nor approach to touch the holy Mount, under the penalty of death; which intimates, (1.) The true distance we ought to keep from God, and teaches us to observe all that reverence which belongs to him, as being infinitely our superior. (2.) This setting bounds and limits to the Mount signified, as in a type, the strictness and exactness

exactness of the law of God. His law is our boundary, which is not to be transgressed.

3. We have a description of the terrible manner in which God appeared to pronounce his law ; which served, (1.) To affect the people with a reverent esteem of those commands, which he should impose on them. (2.) To put them and us in mind, that if God was so terrible only in delivering the law, how much more terrible will he then be when he shall come to judge us for transgressing the law ! Indeed the whole apparatus of this day seems to be typical of the last ; but as it is the condition of all types, it shall be far out-done and exceeded by its antitype.

4. When God had, with his dread voice, spoken these ten Words or Commandments, the affrightment and astonishment of the people was so great, that they intreat Moses to be the interpreter between God and them ; which intimates, (1.) That the law, as it is dispensed to us only from God, is in itself, the ministration of death and condemnation ; but as it is delivered to us by a Mediator, by our Lord Christ, (of whom Moses here was a type) so we may hear and observe it, and obtain eternal life, not for, but through our obedience to it. (2.) That the severity and terrors of the law were intended to drive us unto Christ, as here they drove the Israelites unto Moses, the type of Christ ; from whose mouth the law spake not so dreadfully, as it did from God's.

5. Upon this request of the people, Moses is called up into the Mount ; the Law was deposited into his hands, engraven on two tables of stone by the finger and impression of God himself, and kept in the ark ; which denotes to us, (1.) That our hearts are naturally so hard and stony, that it is only the finger of God that can make any impression of his laws upon them. (2.) The keeping of the Tables of the Law in the Ark, which was a type of Christ, prefigures to us that the Law was to be kept and observed in him, who fulfilled all righteousness.

6. The Law was twice written by God himself, once before, and again after the Tables were broken by Moses ; which signifies the twice writing of the law on the

the hearts of men: First, by the creating finger of God, and then again by his regenerating power, giving us a new impression.

7. When Moses came down from the Mount, his face shone with such a lustre, that the people could not steadfastly look upon him; therefore he put a veil over his face, which he laid aside, when he turned into the tabernacle to speak with God. The significancy of which history the Apostle gives us, 2 Cor. iii. That there was a veil on the hearts of the Jews, so that they could not see to the end of the Law, which is Christ; who is the end of the ceremonial Law, by putting an end to it in its abrogation, and the end of the moral Law, because in him it has attained its end: for the end of it was, by convincing us of our weakness and inability to perform it, to lead us to Christ; by whose merits alone, and not by the works of the Law, we are to expect justification before God. Yet there was so thick a veil cast over the Law, that the Jews could not look through it on the glory that shone in Christ, of whom Moses was still the type; but when they shall turn to the Lord, this veil shall be taken away, and then shall they discern the significancy of all those ritual observances, and perceive spiritual things after a more sublime and spiritual manner.

GENERAL RULES for the right understanding, and expounding of the Commandments.

1. All the precepts in the Holy Scriptures, which concern the regulating of our lives and actions, though not expressly mentioned in the Decalogue, may very aptly be reduced under one of these ten Commandments. There is no duty required, nor sin forbidden, but it falls under one at least of these ten words, and sometimes under more than one; therefore to the right interpretation of this Law, we must take in whatsoever the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught, as comments and expositions on it: for the Decalogue is a compendium of all that they have taught, concerning moral worship and justice. Yea, our Saviour doth epitomize this very epitome, and
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reduces these ten words into two, Love to God and our Neighbour.

2. The affirmative commands, include the prohibition of the contrary sins; and the negative include the injunction of the contrary duties. For example: the third Commandment forbids the taking God's name in vain, therefore the hallowing and sanctifying it is therein commanded. The fourth requires the sanctifying of the sabbath, therefore the profanation of it is thereby forbid.

3. The same precept which forbids the outward acts of sin, forbids the inward desires and motions of sin in the heart; and those which require the external acts of duty, require likewise those holy affections of the soul that are suitable thereto. As for instance; the same command that requires me to worship God, exacts from me not only the outward service of the lip, or of the knee, but much more the inward reverence and affection of my soul: and those who worship God only with their bodies, when their hearts are estranged from him, are guilty of idolatry even in serving and worshipping the true God; for they set up their idols in their hearts, when they come to enquire of him, as the Prophet complains, Ezek. xiv. 7. So the fifth Commandment not only requires the external acts of obedience to parents and those in authority over us, but an inward love and esteem for them in our hearts. So also not only murder is forbid by the sixth Commandment, but all the incentives to, and degrees of it, as anger conceived inwardly in the heart, or expressed outwardly in words, &c.

4. The Command not only forbids the sin expressly mentioned, but all occasions and inducements leading thereto: and as some one sin may be an occasion to all others, so it may be well said to forbid in every precept, such as familiarity with evil persons, drunkennels, &c.

5. The Commands of the first Table are not to be kept for the sake of the second, but the Commands of the second are to be kept for the sake of the first: for the worship and service of God is not to be performed out of respect to men, but our duty towards men is to

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be observed out of respect to God. If we abstain from sins because they will expose us to shame and suffering among men, or worship God that men may respect us, we are but hypocrites. The duties we owe to men are not to be done only for man's sake, but for God's: from a sincere principle of obeying him, conformity to his example, and a comfortable hope and expectation of his eternal reward. And those who perform their duties without respecting God in them, lose both their acceptance and reward. Therefore our Saviour condemns that love and beneficence, which proceeds merely on human and prudential accounts, Matt. v. 46, Luke vi. 33, 34.

6. The moral Commands of the first Table supersede our obedience to the commands of the second, when they are not both consistent. Thus, we are required to obey our parents, and to maintain and preserve our lives; but if we are brought into such circumstances, as that we must necessarily disobey either God or them, either prostitute our souls to guilt or our lives to destruction; in such a case our Saviour has instructed us, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. But the fourth Command being partly moral, and partly positive, our obedience to that may be superseded by the duties of the second table; works of necessity and mercy sometimes will not permit us to be employed in works of piety, nor to sanctify the sabbath after such a manner as else we ought; for the Lord requires mercy rather than sacrifice, Hosea vi. and this our Saviour alledges, Matt. iv. 13; in which sense it holds true that the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath, Mark ii. Whatsoever therefore is a work of necessity, or of charity and mercy, and that not only towards man, but towards brute beasts also, may lawfully be done on the sabbath-day, without bringing on us the guilt of profanation: for that which is purely moral in the second table, doth in a sort, derogate from what is but positive and instituted in the first.

7. Whatsoever is forbid in any Command, all the signs and symptoms of it, and also all the effects and consequents

consequents of it are forbid in the same. Thus, under the prohibition of idolatry falls the prohibition of feasting in idol-temples, and eating meats sacrificed to them, as being too evident a sign of our communion with them. So in the same command, wherein pride is forbid (which is chiefly the first and second, for a proud man sets up himself for his god) all the signs and effects of pride are forbid; as a lofty look, a mincing gait, affected behaviour, vain apparel, Isaiah iii. 16.

8. The connection between the commands is so close and intimate, and they are so linked together, that he who breaks one is guilty of all. That which knits them thus together, is the authority and sovereignty of God, enjoining their observance: So that he who fails in due obedience to any one, does virtually and interpretatively transgress them all, James ii. 10. Since the authority of the great God is one and the same in all those laws, he that shall so far disrespect his authority, as wilfully to break one of them, evidently declares, that he owns it not in any; and though other considerations may restrain such an one from those crimes which are forbid by some commandments, yet his observance of them is no part of obedience, nor can it be interpreted to be performed out of conscience and respect towards God, James ii. 11.

The Preface to the COMMANDMENTS,

Carries an equal respect and reverence to them all, and contains a strong argument in it to enforce the obedience of them. God has accommodated himself to our temper, which is chiefly to be worked upon by fear or love, and proclaims, 1. His authority to beget fear, "I am the Lord thy God." 2. His benefits and mercies to engage love, "that brought thee out of the land of Egypt," &c. Now, what motives can be urged more enforcing than these, which are drawn both from power and goodness; the one obliging us to subjection, the other to gratitude?

1. He is the LORD GOD, the great Creator, only Proprietor, and absolute Governor and Disposer of all things, and therefore, on this account, we owe an awful observance to all his laws and injunctions. It is but fit
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and just, that we should be subject to him who created us, and who has infinite power, for our contumacies and rebellions, eternally to destroy us.

2. As the authority of God is set forth to move us to obedience, by working on our fear, so his benefits and mercies are declared to win us to it, from a principle of love and gratitude. We have received our life, and innumerable blessings and deliverances, both spiritual and temporal, from him. God might have required from us the very same obedience which now he doth, without promising us any reward for it; for we owe him all that we can possibly do, as he is the Author of our being: but he has been so far pleased to condescend from his prerogative, as to command us nothing, but what has already brought us very great advantages; and will, for the future, bring us far greater, when his hands shall be as full of blessings, as his mouth is of commands. He enjoins us a work that is in itself wages, and yet promises us wages for doing that work. Certainly then we must needs be the most disingenuous of all creatures, and the greatest enemies to our own happiness, if these considerations do not win us to yield him that obedience, which redounds not at all to his profit and advantage, but our own.

This deliverance from Egypt and the house of bondage, may be understood typically, as well as literally: and thus understood; God may be said in a spiritual sense, to have brought us also out of Egypt, &c. therefore the enforcement of the Commandments on this account and consideration, belongs to Christians, as well as it did belong to the Church of the Jews. * And if the consideration of a temporal deliverance was so powerful a motive to engage the Israelites to obedience, how much more effectually should we be obliged to it, whose deliverance is far greater than theirs was; for God has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. As our deliverance is spiritual, so ought our obedience to be.

The TEN COMMANDMENTS.

"I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

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The DUTIES REQUIRED in this Commandment are,
 1. That we must have a God; against Atheism. 2. That we must have the Lord Jehovah for our God; which prohibits idolatry. 3. That we must worship the only true God alone for our God; which forbids Polytheism, or the worshipping of many gods; and Samaritanism, or the worshipping of false gods together with the true. 4. That all these services and acts of worship, which we tender unto the true and only God, be performed with sincerity and true devotion. This is implied in the expression "before me," and forbids profanations and hypocrisy; for, because the heart is bare and naked in the sight of God, and our spirits exposed to his view; therefore to have no other god before him denotes, that our serving and worshipping of him ought to be sincere and affectionate. It is not enough to have no other god before me, not to fall down prostrate before any visible idol; but the Law is spiritual, and searches the very thoughts; and if there be any idol set up in the heart, any secret lust or hidden sin, which is the soul's idol, and keeps it from being chaste and true to its God; any crooked ends and sinister respects in the worship of God; this is to have another god in the sight of Jehovah, and before him; who requires truth in the inward parts, and is chiefly delighted in the unfeigned desires and breathings of the heart after him, because by these we own him to be an all-knowing God.

So that this first command respects worship, and in this are included among other duties, the knowledge and love and fear of God, trusting in and obedience to him. Invocation of and rendering praise to him. The love of God is the principle from which all our actions should flow; and the glory of God, the end to which they should be directed. Now, to do a thing to the glory of God, is to do it in obedience to his commands, and in imitation of his adorable excellencies and perfections. There are several other duties included in the true worship of God; but in these especially doth consist the having the Lord for our God.—Love (and the same may be said of the fear) of God, is the sum of all the commands of the first table, and hath in it these three acts or degrees, viz. 1. An earnest and panting desire

desire after God. The holy soul thirsts after the waters, brooks, the streams of his ordinances, wherein God pours out his grace and his Spirit, to refresh the longing desires of this holy impatience; but not being satisfied with this, he still makes up to the fountain, and never rests contented, till he has ingulphed and plunged himself into God, and is swallowed up in beatitude! — 2. Joy in the fruition of God, according to the measures of God's communicating himself to the soul. — 3. A holy zeal for God. Zeal is the indignation of the soul, and the revenge that it takes on whatsoever is an impediment to the obtaining its desires. Now, the earnest desire of a true saint is the enjoyment of God, and the glory of God, and of both these, sin is the only let and hindrance: therefore a soul that is passionate for God, has not so great indignation against any thing as sin, whether it be in himself, or in others. Can he endure to see his God daily provoked and injured, to hear his name blasphemed, to see his ordinances despised, his servants abused, &c. and not rise up to vindicate his honour? He is jealous for the Lord of Hosts, he mourns and weeps in secret for the provocations daily committed against the great Majesty of heaven; and if he has power and authority to do it, punishes and avenges them openly.

This first Command is the ground and foundation of the other three Commands of the first Table; for as this requires in the general, that the true God should be truly worshipped, so the three next prescribe the means and branches of his worship, and the way and manner how he would have it performed.

The sins forbidden, are, 1. Atheism, both speculative and practical, in respect either of the being or attributes of God. If there be a God, he must necessarily have all perfections, and every perfection in an infinite degree; therefore to deny any one of God's perfections, whether in kind or degree, is the same thing, as to deny his very being: so that an Atheist, is one who denies the being of a God, or a Providence, or any of the divine perfections or attributes, and consequently has no religion, true or false. If he denies any of these expressly in words, or disbelieves them in his mind, he is

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a speculative Atheist; if he denies them in his life and conversation, by living as if there was no God, or as if that God did not see, and take notice of his actions, or would not reward or punish him according as they are good or evil; such a one is a practical Atheist. And this every natural man is, who goes on contentedly in his sins, however convinced he may be in his own mind of the being and perfections of God, and however strongly he may assert and maintain them in words. From hence it is plain, that under the head of Atheism may be ranked all presumption and despair, distrust and carnal security.

2. Ignorance of the true God: for this precept which requires us to have the Lord for our God, as well includes the having him in our understanding, by knowing him aright, as in our wills and affections, by loving, fearing, and worshipping him. The right worship of God must necessarily presuppose the knowledge of the object, to whom we direct that worship; otherwise we do but erect an altar to the unknown god, and all our adoration is but superstition; yea, and we ourselves are but idolaters, though we worship the true Deity: for all that service which is not directed to the supreme Essence, who is infinitely holy, just, merciful, and glorious, beyond what we can conceive, is not tendered to the true God, but to an idol, of our own making. We worship we know not what, John iv. 22, whilst we have no distinct knowledge of God's nature, will, and attributes. All ignorant persons are idolaters, who though they fall not down before stocks and stones, yet form such uncouth ideas and strange images of God in their minds, that no more represent his infinite perfections, than those dumb idols that the heathen worship. Now it is a difficult matter to have right and genuine conceptions of the Divine Majesty, when we address ourselves to him to worship him; and unless we do represent God to ourselves, when we worship him, it is hard, if not impossible, to keep up the intention of our spirit, and to hinder our mind from straying. Therefore the right way to attain to a true notion of the divine nature is, by a serious consideration of God's attributes; and when we come to worship him,

him, let us not frame any idea of him in our imagination, but labour to possess our hearts with an awful esteem of his attributes, of his infinite justice, mercy, truth, power, &c. All other attributes, as we conjoin them either to mercy or justice, are most enforcing motives either of hope or fear. It is a mighty support to our hope, when we reflect on the mercy of God accompanied with the attributes of eternity, immutability, truth, and omnipotence. And again, it will affect us with a profound fear and dread of this great and glorious God, to consider that the same attributes attend on his justice.

3. Profaneness. If this be taken in a more large and general sense, every ungodly sinner, who gives himself to work wickedness, and lives in a course of infamous and flagitious crimes, is called and reputed a prophane person. And indeed he is profane in the highest degree, that not only neglects the more spiritual duties of religion, but the natural duties of moral honesty, temperance, and sobriety. But in a more proper and restrained sense, profaneness signifies only the neglect or despising of spiritual things; for in strict acceptation, he is a prophane person, who either slights the duties of God's service, or the privileges of his servants.— Now the spiritual and sacred things are,

First, God himself, in his nature, and in his name, and attributes. 1. In his nature and essence, we profane God, when we entertain any blasphemous or unworthy thoughts of him, derogatory to his infinite perfections.— 2. In his Name; which we profane, when in our trivial discourses, we rashly bolt out his great and terrible name, and much more by oaths and execrations.— 3. In his attributes; which we profane, when our affections or actions are opposite, or unsuitable to them. We profane his holiness by our impurity; his omnipotence by our despondency; his omniscience by our hypocrisy; his mercy, by our despair; his justice, by our presumption; his wisdom, by our sinful policy; his truth, by our security, notwithstanding his threatenings; and our slothfulness, notwithstanding his promises. And in this sense every sin is a kind of profaneness, as it manifests a contempt of the infinite excellencies of

the Deity; for there is no man, whose heart is possessed with a reverential and due esteem of God, that can be induced by any temptation to sin against him, and provoke him. Every sin is a slighting of God, either of his justice, or mercy, or holiness, or power, or all of them: for what do we when we sin, but prefer some base pleasure or sordid advantage before the great God of heaven? Nay, we often sin against God for nothing, and defy his wrath and justice, without being provoked to it by any temptation. Thus the selling of Christ for thirty pieces of silver, argued not only treason, but contempt, Zech. xi. 13.

Secondly, The time which God has set apart and consecrated for his own worship and service, is sacred and holy; and we profane it, when we employ any part of it, in the unnecessary affairs of this life, but much more in the service of sin. This is a sacrilegious robbing of God of what is dedicated entirely to him, and that either by his immediate appointment, as the Sabbath: or by the appointment of those whom God has set over us, and entrusted not only to preserve our rights and properties, but also his worship inviolate, as

Special days of thanksgiving, or humiliation.

Thirdly, The ordinances of Christ are holy and sacred; which we profane, when either we neglect them, or are remiss and careless in our attendance on them.

Now therefore, (1.) He is a profane person, that thinks and speaks but slightly of religion; which is the chief excellency of human nature. All the works of creation glorify God, by shewing forth his infinite attributes in their frame and production; but rational creatures alone can worship, and praise him. He is profane, that takes up his religion by chance, without examining the reasonableness and certainty of it; who does not believe religion to be a matter of that concernment, as to require his exactest study and industry, in searching into its grounds and principles: but thinks that any may suffice whatsoever it be, or who secretly despises the holiness and strictness of others, and thinks they are too precise.

(2.) He is a profane person, who neglects the public worship and service of God, when he has opportunity
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and ability to frequent it, either out of a wretched sloth and contempt of the ordinances of Christ, being glad of any idle excuse, as the badness of the weather, and the like, for absenting himself; or out of a pretended dissatisfaction and scruple of conscience, though he allows himself in a state of sin and rebellion against God: for this is only humour and frowardness, because he has been of another way, therefore he will pertinaciously maintain it.

(3.) He is profane, who neglects the performance of religious duties, in his family, and in secret: or who performs them slightly and superficially, without zeal and affection. All our christian sacrifices of prayer and praise must be offered up with fire, (as the Jewish sacrifices were, Lev. ix. 24.—vi. 13.) and that fire which alone can sanctify them, must be darted down from heaven. Also he is profane, that performs holy duties for worldly ends and advantages. A hypocrite is the most profane wretch that lives; the gross and profligate sinner offers not half so much indignity to religion, as he doth.

(4.) He is profane, who makes what God has sanctified, common and unhallowed, by taking his name in vain, profaning the sabbath, and word of God, &c. And he that despises spiritual privileges and enjoyments. If it were so profane as Esau, (Heb. xii.) to slight the priesthood in himself, they also are profane who vilify it in others, and make those the objects of their scorn and contempt, whose office it is to stand and minister before God and Christ: and so are they, who despise the privileges and dignity of the children of God. And the disrespect shewn to the messengers and children of God, argues a secret contempt of him, who is their Master and their Father.

(5.) Idolatry, which includes Polytheism and Samaritanism.—Idolatry is either external, (which is forbid in the second command) or internal, which is prohibited in this command, and is the giving to any thing in heaven or earth, that inward heart-worship of affiance, love, fear, veneration, and dependance, which is due only to the true God. And they are guilty of idolatry.

First, who acknowledge and worship another god different from him, who has revealed himself to us in his Holy Scriptures. Now they who, though acknowledging one infinite and eternal Being, deny the persons of the Son and Holy Ghost, worship an idol, and not the true God; for the only true God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Secondly, Those that say that Christ is God, and worship him as God, yet deny that he is of the same nature and substance with the Lord Jehovah, must necessarily make more gods than one, and those of a diverse essence and being; and therefore are not only guilty of blasphemy, in robbing Christ of his eternal sonship and the divine nature, but of idolatry, in attributing divine honour and worship to him, whom they believe to be but a creature, and not God by nature.

Thirdly, Those who ascribe or render to any creature that which is proper and due only to God; as those who hold the body of Christ to be omnipresent, and all those who chiefly and supremely love any creature: as the covetous person, Col. iii. 5; the sensual epicure, Phil. iii. 19; the proud person; for he loves himself supremely, sets up himself for his own idol, and generally all such, who love and admire any thing above God, or esteem any thing so dear, that they would not willingly part with it for his sake: and all who put their trust and confidence in any creature, more than in God, as when we depend on interest, or power, or policy, for our safe-guard and success. And that we do so appears, when we are secure and confident of the enjoyment of such created comforts and supports, but diffident and dejected when we are deprived of them: For since God is always the same, we should likewise have the same spirit and courage, did we place our whole affiance in him. Lastly, he is a gross idolater, who sets up any creature in his heart, whether saint or angel, to pray to it.

“II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,” &c. &c.

As spiritual and internal idolatry, residing in the affections and dispositions of the soul, is forbid in the first

first Command; so is external idolatry, which is the outward expression of the other, forbid in this Command: and by consequence, we are by (the second general rule) required to worship God, according to the rules he has prescribed us. And therefore, as the first command comprehends whatsoever appertains to the internal worship of God; so under this is comprehended whatever appertains to the external and visible worship of God.—Now concerning the worship of God, Note,

1. That the true and spiritual worship of God is an action of a pious soul, wrought and excited in us by the Holy Ghost, whereby with godly love and fear we serve God acceptably according to his will revealed in his word: by faith embracing his promises, and in obedience performing his commands to his glory, the edification of others, and our own eternal salvation. And it comprehends both inward and outward worship.

2. External worship is a sacred action of a pious soul, wrought and excited by the Holy Ghost, whereby with all reverence we serve God, both in words and deeds, according to his revealed will; in partaking of his sacraments, attending on his ordinances, and performing those holy duties he has required from us, to his glory, the edification of others, and our own salvation. This worship, though external, is nevertheless spiritual: for it proceeds from the Spirit of God, exciting our spirits to the performance of it, and is directed by a spiritual rule to a spiritual end.

3. The parts of this external worship are divers, whereof the most principal are the celebration of the sacraments, solemn prayer, and solemn praise and thanksgiving. But besides these there are many other things which belong to the service of God, as many as there are duties of religion and piety; such are a free, open, and undaunted profession of the truth, a religious vowing to God things that are lawful and in our power, an invoking of the testimony of God to the truth of what we assert, or to the faithful discharge of what we promise, when we are duly called to do it by lawful authority, a diligent reading of the word of God, and a constant and reverent attendance on it when it is read
and

and preached; fasting, and divers other duties: some of which belong to the proper worship of God, as parts of it, others as means and helps to it.

4. Though God especially delights in the acts of internal worship, such are faith, hope, charity, reverence, patience, and a cheerful willingness to perform all the duties of obedience, without which all other acts of worship are dead and unfavoury; yet this internal worship alone suffices not, without the performance of those parts of external worship, which may, to the glory of God, and the good example of others, express the devout dispositions of our souls. For (1.) God has no less strictly enjoined his external worship, than he hath his internal. (2.) God severely threatens and punishes such as give external worship unto any other, but himself. And we find in 2 Kings xxix. that God makes a punctual computation of those who had not alienated their bodily worship to the service of an idol; and therefore we may conclude, that he respects and accepts those, who in faith and sincerity tender it to himself. (3.) God has created the whole man, both soul and body for himself, and sustains both in their being, and therefore expects homage and service from both: from the soul, as the chief seat of worship; from the body, as the best testimony of it. (4.) Not only our souls, but our bodies too, are redeemed by Christ; therefore both should be employed in his worship and service: yea, our bodies are said to be temples of the Holy Ghost; and where should God be worshipped, or that worship appear, but in his temple? (5.) The body is to partake of the blessings of obedience; therefore it is but reasonable, it should partake of the service of obedience.

5. All that outward reverence which we shew in worship, must be estimated according to the customs of places; so that what they use as a sign and expression of honour to their superiors, (such as uncovering the head, bowing the body, and an humble submission and settled composure) ought much more to be used in the presence of the great God: not that they are essential parts of worship, but testimonies of it.

9. We

6. We ought not to use any other external worship, than what God himself has appointed in his holy word. The scripture has set our bounds for worship, to which we must not add, and from which we ought not to diminish. But if any thing be imposed on us, not as a part of worship, but as a circumstance and modification of worship, we ought to submit to it, if the things so imposed, be in themselves lawful and honest: which they are, if not condemned by Scripture—if they tend to order and decency in the church—if imposed by command of a lawful power—if they are such as neither for their levity or number, distract the seriousness and devotion of our spiritual worship.

SINS FORBID.—Contempt of the worship of God, (of which already in the character of profane persons and superstition in performing it. Superstition is a needless and erroneous fear in matters of religion; and is either negative, which consists in making the not-doing of that, which is lawful and harmless, a matter of conscience and religion; or positive, which is a restless fear of the mind, putting men upon acts of religion, which are not due, or not convenient: and expresses

itself either by giving divine honours to that which is not god, or worshipping the true God by an image, which is idolatry; or secondly, by performing needless and superfluous services to the true God, which is will-worship. And that is nothing else, but the inventing and ascribing any other worship to God, besides what he has commanded and instituted.—To use traditionary charms and incantations, or any vain observances, to free us from pains and diseases, or other troubles that molest us, falls under this head of superstition.

THE SANCTION of this precept contains a gracious promise of mercy to the careful and conscientious observers of it, and a severe and fearful threatening against all who shall presume to violate it.—In the threatening we have these things considerable.

1st, Who is it that denounces it: "I the Lord thy God," &c. Which words contain in them a description of God. First, by his relation to us, thy God. Secondly, by the mightiness of his power; for the words may be rendered, I the Lord thy God am strong
and

and jealous; strong, and therefore able, jealous and therefore will revenge dishonour done him by idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, and frequently set forth under that name in Scripture. The cause and original of jealousy is love, and the effects of it is revenge. Now this jealousy is ascribed to God, only by way of accommodation and similitude, speaking after the manner of men; so that there is not *idem affectus*, the same inward affection, but *idem effectus*, the same outward effect. And the reason why God calls himself here a jealous God, you will find in these following particulars. (1.) Jealousy is distrustful and suspicious; and God, (though in propriety of speech he can doubt and fear nothing,) is pleased to express his jealousy by such speeches, as intimate distrust and diffidence. (2.) It is searching and inquisitive, and of all sins there is none that God more jealously observes than that of idolatry; for this is the violation of that marriage faith, which we have plighted to him. (2.) It is angry and revengeful, and God is pleased to stile himself a jealous God, to express the heat of his wrath and indignation against sinners, Deut. xxix. 20, Zeph. i. 18.

2d. What it is that is denounced: "To visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children." In the general, God is said to visit, when after a long space of time, in which he seemed to have forgotten or taken no notice of men, he declares by his providence that he has still observed their ways and doings. And this word may be taken either in a good part, as when God bestows great mercies and salvation on his people, he is said to visit them. So Exodus iii. 16, Luke i. 68, or in an evil part, as here, when God rewards those sins, at which he seemed to connive with deserving punishment.—Now if it be the usual method of Divine Providence, to visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children, what great reason have parents to beware, that they do not lay a stock of plagues and curses for their posterity; and what great reason have they to render thanks and praise to God, who are born of holy and pious parents, such as treasure up not wrath for them, but prayers.

3d. The

3d. The persons against whom this threatening is denounced: Those that hate him. And by the context, they are such, as contemning the only true God, prostitute themselves to idols; but who they are, is more fully explained in the antithesis subjoined, "keeping mercy for thousands of those that love me and keep my commandments;" for if those that keep God's commandments, are lovers of him, (which Christ affirms, John xiv. 24.) It follows, that those who transgress his commandments, are haters of God.

4th. The duration of that vengeance: It shall be to the third and fourth generation on their posterity; but on themselves, eternally. And yet even in this threatening there is mercy contained; for it is a mercy, that such a wicked race are not cut off, and cast out of his sight and grace for ever. And this mercy glorifies itself against judgment, in that he shews mercy unto thousands, but visits iniquity only to the third and fourth generation.

"III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," &c.

The external worship of God consists of three parts, prostration of the body, (already treated of),—profession of the mouth, required in this command, and the observation of prefixed time, which falls under the fourth command.—In this prohibition two things are to be enquired into:

I. What is meant by the name of God. And this has sundry exceptions in the Scripture: (1.) Sometimes it is taken for the nature and being of the Deity himself, Psalm xx. 1.—cxxxv. 3.—cxv. 1. Luke xxiv. 47. John i. 12. (2.) Sometimes the name of God is taken for the whole system of divine and heavenly doctrine revealed in the Scriptures.—Thus Psalm xxii. 22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," which the Apostle cites, as spoken in the person of Christ, Heb. ii. and the meaning is, that Christ should declare to the world a true spiritual doctrine and way of worship, and teach them a religion, which should perfect their reason and save their souls. See John xvii. 6. 26. Micah iv. 5. (3.) The name of God is taken for that whereby

whereby God is called, and which his nature and perfections are made known to men. Now these names of God are either his titles or his attributes. His titles are his name; and they are some of them absolute; such are those glorious titles, JAH, JEHOVAH, GOD, I AM, which are altogether incomprehensible and stupendous; others are relative, respecting us; so his name of Creator denotes his power, in giving being to all things; Lord and King signify his dominion and authority in disposing and governing all that he has made; Father, his care and goodness in providing for us his offspring; Redeemer, his mercy in delivering us from temporal evils and calamities, but especially from eternal death and destruction. His attributes also are his name: some of which are incommunicable, as his eternity, immortality, immutability, simplicity, &c. others are communicable, as his mercy, goodness, holiness, and truth, &c. for some rays of them may be found in the creatures: but God is only merciful, good, &c. originally, infinitely, unchangeably, simply, and in the abstract. And the name of God in the text is to be understood concerning his titles and attributes, neither of which must be taken in vain.

II. What is it to take the name of God in vain. To take the name of God is to make use of it, either as the object of our thought, or the subject of our discourses. And we take his name in vain,

(1.) When we use it without propounding to ourselves a due end, or without due consideration and reverence, or in an undue and unlawful action.—First, without propounding to ourselves a due end. If the end be vain, the action must be so too, and there are but two ends that can justify the use of any of God's names, either his titles or attributes; and they are—the glory of God, the edification of ourselves and others. His name should never be uttered, but where the subject of our discourse is serious and weighty.—Secondly, without due consideration and reverence. Whenever we make mention of him, we ought seriously to ponder his infinite greatness and glory, and to bow our hearts in the deepest protestation before that name to which all the powers in heaven and earth bow down
with

with most humble veneration. But is it possible for those who speak of God promiscuously and at random, to utter his Name with reverence, when all the rest of their discourse is nothing but froth and levity? Nay, if they be reprov'd for it, will they not alledge that for their excuse, which is their very sin, that they did not consider it? The tongue of man is called his glory, Psalm lvii. 8; and shall the glory of man be the dishonour of God? Shall that which was created to be a principal instrument of magnifying God's name, run it over without affection or reverence? The things which we most despise we use by by-words, and lay no great sense nor stress upon them. And where we speak of God without due consideration and reverence, we do but make him a by-word; which is the highest contempt and indignity that can be cast upon him.—Thirdly, in an undue and unlawful action, especially when it is brought to confirm a falsehood, either in perjury or heresy. And it is observable, that the same word here rendered vain, signifies also false and deceitful: and what greater sin can there be than to bring God to be a witness to our lie?

(2.) We take the name of God in vain in our duty and holy performances.—First, when we ask those things of God, which are unlawful or unwarrantable; as when we pray in behalf of our lusts, or out of envy or malice. Such prayers are vain, for either they shall not be granted, or if they be, it will be in wrath. Secondly, when we perform holy duties slightly, and without affection. Therefore, all hypocritical services, all battologies, and heartless ingeminations, are vain, and God's name is not sanctified but abused in them; for whatsoever we do in such a manner, as we may be certain God will not accept, is done in vain. Now God will accept of no performance which is not accompanied with the heart, and filled with most devout affections; and therefore they are performed in vain, and to no other effect but to increase our guilt and condemnation. Such invocations are but scoffings of God.

(3.) The name of God is profaned by unlawful oaths and execrations.—Oaths are assertory and promissory.—

To make an oath lawful, it must be taken in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.—First, a warrantable oath must be accompanied with truth. We must take care that what we depose to be true, and must be fully certain that the thing is as we attest it; for a man may be guilty of perjury in swearing that which is true, if he believe it otherwise, or be doubtful of it. Therefore we should look, that our words agree with our mind, otherwise we shall be forsworn,—that the things agree with our words, or we shall be false-swearers.—Secondly, it must be taken in judgment, discreetly and deliberately, advising and pondering with ourselves, before we swear. We must consider both the matter, whether that be right and good, and the ends, whether they are duly propounded by us; and there are but two ends, that can warrant an oath, the benefit of ourselves or others, and the glory of God.—Thirdly, it must be taken in righteousness. We must not bind ourselves by oath or vow, to do things impossible or sinful. The matter of a just oath ought to be possible, lawful, and honest. We should in all our promissory oaths caution and limit them with those reasonable exceptions, of—as far as we know, and can lawfully endeavour.

Falsehood and rashness make an oath unlawful. An oath is a sacred thing, and part of divine worship; therefore those that swear by any created being, (as by their faith, truth, &c.) are guilty not only of vain swearing, but of idolatry too. And it is perjury to violate an oath conceived by creatures, because of the near relation that all creatures have to God, their Creator, Matt. xxiii. 22. Whosoever swears by any creature, does virtually swear by the Almighty Creator of it. All vehement assertions have in them somewhat of the nature, and are dangerous beginnings of oaths; and those who accustom themselves to them, will in time think them not forcible enough to confirm their speeches, and so be brought to attest them by oaths. Speak truth simply and nakedly, without making any thing the pawn and pledge of it. Allow not yourself any form of assertion, but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay.—There are several other violations of this command; as blasphemy, rash vows, unnecessary oaths, &c.

The

3 The great positive duty required in this command, is, the reverencing and sanctifying the name of God, whensoever we make mention of him, or of any thing that relates to him; and asserting and vindicating to the utmost of our power his name, whenever we hear it dishonoured. We are said to sanctify and glorify God, when in our most reverend thoughts we observe and admire his holiness, and the bright connections of his attributes; and when we endeavour by all holy ways to declare them to others, that they may observe and admire them with us, and give to God that holy veneration, which is due to him. The best way and means to sanctify the name of God, is by enlarging his kingdom, and bringing in many to submit to his sceptre and government.

“ IV. Remember the Sabbath-Day, to keep it holy,”
&c.

In these words we have a command, and the enforcement of it.

1. The command is to sanctify the sabbath. And this is observable, that whereas all the rest are simply either positive or negative, this is both. Remember to keep it holy; and in it thou shalt not do any work. As if God took an especial care to fence us in, on all sides, to the observation of this precept.

The word sabbath signifies rest, and cessation from labour, and from the slavery and drudgery of sin. And of this spiritual sabbath, the temporal one is a sign and type. Sabbath is used also to signify the eternal rest of the blessed in heaven.

The sabbath was instituted immediately after the creation, Gen. ii. 2, 3, so that it is but one day younger than man, ordained for him in the state of innocence, that his faculties being then holy and excellent, he might employ them especially on that day, in the singular and most spiritual worship of God, his Creator. This command is partly moral, in that it requires a due portion of our time to be dedicated to the service and worship of God; and partly positive, in that it prescribes the seventh day for that especial service, which the light and law of nature did not prefix: For if we

lay aside the positive command of God, there is no one day in itself, better than another, and therefore there is a memento prefixed to the command, "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath-day," which is not added to any other precept; intimating to us that the observation of a special day is not a dictate of nature, but only an imposition of God, which he requires us to remember and bear in mind.—As the first institution of the sabbath was by divine authority; so likewise is the change of it. For as God rested from his works on the last day of the week, so Christ rested from all his labours, sorrows, and affliction on this day, in which he fully completed the work of our redemption, and manifested it to be perfected by his resurrection from the dead. Christ sanctified this day by his resurrection; and the Apostles confirmed the observation of it, both by their writings and uniform practice, Acts xx. 7. Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, which plainly declares, that the solemn meetings and assemblies of Christians, were then on this day; the Jewish sabbath beginning to wear out, and the Christian sabbath, or the Lord's day, coming into its place and stead. Again, the public collections for the poorer saints were ordained by the Apostle to be made on this day, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. And why? but because the assemblies of christians were held on this day, and so gave a better conveniency to gather their charity than at any other time. Again, this day is called the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10. Now put the force of these scriptures together, and they will amount to the proof of the institution of this first day sabbath. Another argument to prove this change, is the constant and uninterrupted practice of the church in all ages, from the time of man's redemption by the death and resurrection of Christ, to the present time. The practice of the Apostles has been already declared; and for the practice of the primitive church immediately after the Apostles, all ecclesiastical histories testify, that the solemn assemblies of christians were held on this day. If to this we add the great blessing that God has poured out upon his people, in the plentiful effusion of his Grace and Spirit

Spirit on them, in his holy ordinances celebrated on this day, it will be past all question, that this is the day which the Lord has made for himself, and therefore let us be glad and rejoice therein.

Concerning the Sanctification of the Sabbath.

This command speaks of a two-fold sanctification of this day. The one which it hath already received from God; the other which it ought to receive from man. And the former is given as a reason of, and motive to the latter.—God has sanctified the sabbath-day, by consecrating and setting it apart for his worship and service, and he also sanctified it in an effective sense, as he has appointed it to be the day whereon he does especially bless and sanctify us; yea, and possibly he makes the means of our sanctification to be more effectual on this day, than when they are dispensed on any other common days. God does then especially give out plentiful effusions of his Spirit, fills his ordinances with his grace and presence; and we may with a more confident faith expect a greater portion of spiritual blessings from him, when both the ordinances and the day are his, than when, though the ordinances be his, yet the day is ours.—As God sanctified the sabbath, so man is commanded to sanctify it also. Now we are to sanctify it by devotion, observing it holy to the Lord, sequestering ourselves from common affairs to those of spiritual exercises, which he has required us to be conversant about on that day.

The sanctifying the sabbath consists partly in abstaining from those things, whereby it would be profaned, and partly in the performance of those things which are required of us, and tend to promote the sanctity and holiness of it. In order to our due sanctifying of the sabbath, we ought to abstain from the common and servile works of our calling. In it thou shalt not do any work. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord. That exceptive particle, *but*, intimates to us, that none of that work which is lawful to be done on ordinary days, ought to be performed by us on the sabbath. Now this prohibition of working on the sabbath is strongly enforced by the concession of six days for our ordinary

ordinary labour. A concession it may be called, considering the indulgence granted to us; but yet it is not merely a concession, but a command too: six days shalt thou labour. These words are preceptive, requiring us diligently to attend that vocation and state of life, in which Divine Providence has sent us, and to perform the offices of it with care and conscience: for it is not said, thou mayest labour, but thou shalt not labour. So that all idleness and sloth is expressly forbid by this command. But this precept is not to be understood absolutely and unlimitedly, but with a just restraint and exception; that is, thou shalt labour six days ordinarily; unless any of them be set apart either by thy own private devotion, or by public authority, for the immediate worship and service of God. And that this is of necessity to be understood, appears, if we consider how many days in the week God himself did dedicate in those feasts which he commanded the Jews strictly to observe, notwithstanding that they were enjoined six days labour: as every New Moon, the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Atonement, and of Tabernacles. And not only did they account themselves obliged to keep these days holy, which were enjoined by the divine command, but those also appointed by human authority: as the Feast of the Purim, Esther ix. 21, and the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, Ezra vi. 16; which, though but of human institution, Christ was pleased to honour with his presence, John x. 22. Besides, we read frequently of fasts, both personal and national, appointed on some emergent occasions. And the like to these, without doubt, either our own private devotion, or the public authority of the nation, may in the like circumstances impose on us, without violating this command of six days labour. But though this six days labour was not so strictly required as not sometimes to admit the intervention of a holy rest; yet the seventh day's rest was so exactly to be observed, as not to admit any bodily labour, or secular employment. And we find this command strictly enforced by the double sanction of a promise and threatening, Jer. xvii.

Notwithstanding this rest and cessation from labour, that is required on the Lord's day, yet there are three sorts

sorts of works that may and ought to be performed on it, how great soever our bodily labour may be in doing them. And they are,

(1.) Works of piety, which are indeed the proper works of the day.

(2.) Works of necessity, and of great convenience. And we find our Saviour defending his disciples against the exceptions of the Pharisees, for plucking the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them on the sabbath, Matt. xii. 1, &c. Only take this caution, that you neglect not the doing of these things till the Lord's day, which might be well done before, and then plead necessity or convenience for it.

(3.) Works of charity and mercy. This day is instituted for a memorial of God's great mercy towards us; and therefore in it we are obliged to shew charity and mercy: charity towards men, and mercy to the very beasts themselves, Matt. xii. 12, Luke xiii. 15.

The sanctification of the sabbath does especially consist in a diligent and conscientious attendance on all the ordinances of God, and the duties of his worship, both in public and in private with our families, and in secret by ourselves.

2. The enforcement of this command is more particular, and with greater care and instance, than we find in any other command; for God has here condescended to use three cogent arguments, to press the observation of this law upon us. (1.) The first is taken from his own example, whom certainly it is our glory, as well as our duty, to imitate in all things, in which he has propounded himself to be our pattern. The Lord rested the seventh day, and therefore rest ye also. (2.) The second, from that bountiful and liberal portion of time, that he has allowed us for the affairs and business of this present life, six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; and therefore it is but fit and equitable, that the seventh should be given to God, who has so freely given the rest to thee. (3.) The third, from the dedication of this day to his own immediate worship and service: the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it. So that it is no less a sin than sacrilege

lege, to purloin any part of that time which God has thus consecrated to himself, and to employ it about their sinful or secular actions.

“ V. Honour thy Father and Mother, &c.”

We may observe, that God first prescribes what concerns himself, and then what concerns us, which teaches us;

I. That in all our actions, whether civil or sacred, God ought principally to be regarded; his glory ought to be our highest aim and end. This we are to seek in the first place; and for the sake and interest of this, to promote the good and benefit of men.

II. It teaches us to observe our due distance from God. He challenges all possible reverence from us; insomuch that he will not permit so great a disparagement to his honour, as to have his concerns intermingled with ours, no, not in the same table.

Men may be considered either as under some peculiar differences, or else in their common natures. The duties that belong unto them under the first acceptation, as they are differenced into superiors and inferiors (which are co-relatives), are prescribed in this command. There are other duties which appertain universally to all, whether they be superiors or inferiors, or equal among themselves; and these are contained in the five following precepts, all of which do respect our neighbour, either in his person, or in his exterior gifts of wealth or good name.—His person is to be considered either naturally, as he is this individual man, and so the sixth command provides for his security; or nuptially, as he is in the state of marriage, and so care is taken of him in the seventh.—If we consider him in his external gifts, so his estate and substance is secured by the eighth commandment, his reputation and good name by the ninth.—And has a strong fence set about him, and also about the other laws, that neither of them be violated. God has not only prohibited the outward acts of gross and flagitious crimes, but the inward and lurking motions to evil in our thoughts and affections, and this in the tenth commandment.—In the due performance

formance of all these, consist the observance of that second great command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Matt. xxii. 39.

We may observe here a ray of God's infinite wisdom, in the order and method of this commandment; for after he had prescribed laws for his own honour, his next care is for the honour of our parents, because they are next under him, the authors and original of our lives and beings.—This command is very large and comprehensive, extending itself to all that are our superiors.—Governors and magistrates are to be accounted and revered by us as fathers. Indeed they are *patries patriæ*, for all government was at first domestic and paternal, and magistrates succeeding in the place and office of parents are now the public fathers, having the same power devolved on them, which formerly resided in the fathers of families. Hence we read that common and successive name of the Philistines, Abimeleck, which signifies, the king my father.—The master of a private family is a father, not only with respect to his children, but to his servants. And therefore, 2 Kings v. 13, we find that Naaman is called father by his servants.—A teacher in any art, science, or invention, is called a father, Gen. iv. 20, 21.—A superior in wisdom and counsel is called a father. So in Joseph's speech, Gen. xlv. 8, God hath made me a father to Pharaoh.—The ministers of the gospel have likewise the title of fathers conferred on them. Thus St. Paul tells the church, 2 Cor. iv. 15, that he was their father, having begotten them through the Gospel.—Superiors in any gift of Divine Providence, whether of riches, or of age, or of knowledge, and the like; are to be revered and honoured by us as fathers, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. So that this word, father, is very copious, and takes in many relations and states of men, both in the Family, and in the Church, and Common-wealth.

First, In the Family.

I. Duties of Husband and Wife.

Common duties to be performed by both mutually are, fervent prayers to God severally and together, for his blessings and graces upon them, and for wisdom to demean themselves towards each other aright. Con-
jugal

jugal love. Faithfulness to the bed. Communion of themselves, of their estates, and habitations. Mutual bearing one another's weakness, with prudent and pious endeavours to heal and remove them. The nurture and education of children. The government of their family, for whom they are to provide not only what is requisite for their corporeal good, but much more for their spiritual; and therefore they ought to observe constant family duties, and choose honest and religious servants, and as far as in them lies, keep out the infection of evil company from entering within their doors.

Husband's Duties.

(1.) Conjugal love. A wife is to be loved above parents, or children. A man should love his wife as his own body, as himself, Eph. v. He must be as careful and tender of her good, as of his own, and resent an injury done to her, as much as if it were done to himself. By marriage two are said to be made one flesh, and no man yet ever hated his own flesh, Eph. v. All violence and outrage against a wife is as unnatural, as it would be for a man to beat and wound himself, ver. 25, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Christ loved the church, his spouse, though there were many blemishes and imperfections in her, and so as to leave his father, and cleave to his wife; he loved her better than his own life, and shed his most precious blood for her, and rather than the wrath of God should fall on his beloved spouse, he thrusts himself between, and receives those heavy blows on his own person: So sincerely ought men to love their wives.

(2.) Provident care for her. "He ought," says the Apostle, "to nourish and cherish her, as Christ doth the church."

(3.) Protection from wrongs and injustice.

(4.) Instruction and direction. The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, Eph. v. Therefore as all direction and consolation is derived from Christ, so should the husband derive down and communicate knowledge, and comfort, and guidance to the wife. And St. Peter requires of husbands to dwell with their wives according to knowledge,

ledge, to be able to advise and inform them in all emergent cases, especially concerning God and their souls. But if the wife be endued with a greater measure of prudence and solid knowledge than the husband, it is then his part to hearken to her advice, and to yield, not indeed to the authority of the counsellor, as she is bound to do, but to the authority of the counsel. And this she ought to tender him with all respect and submission, not having power to enjoin, but only with modesty propounding it, and with meekness persuading him to embrace it.

(5.) Tenderneſs and mildneſs towards her, not cauſeleſſly grieving her, either by ſpeeches or actions.

(6.) Giving her due reſpect and honour. Think honourably of her, as the perſon God ſaw fitteſt for you, and be not tempted, ſo much as in thought, to believe, that any other could have been ſo proper or beneficial to you. Speak honourably of her, not divulging any of her failings or imperfections, but giving her the due praiſe of thoſe virtues and graces that are in her. Treat her honourably, neither making thyſelf a ſervant to her humour, nor making her a ſlave to thine; but uſe her as thy boſom-friend, and in every thing, but authority, equal to thyſelf.

(7.) A prudent maintaining and managing his authority. His authority over her is God's, who has entrusted him with it; therefore it is not baſely to be betrayed, nor to be maintained with a rigour and tyrannical violence; but the moſt effectual way of keeping it up, is by prudence and gravity, ſoberneſs and piety, and a ſtayed, exemplary, and ſtrict life. This will cauſe a reverent eſteem in the wife, and in the whole family. And it is a hard matter for a man to be revered by others, who does not firſt reverence himſelf.

Wife's Duties. (1.) Subjection and obedience, which is required from them, as abſolutely as unto Chriſt himſelf, Eph. v. 22, 23; and the Apoſtle enforces it by ſundry reaſons, as you may ſee, 1 Cor. xi. 3, 8, 9, 1 Tim. ii. 12, 13, 14. This duty is frequently expreſſed, "Submit yourſelves;" and the manner of performing it, "Be ſubject as to the Lord; ſubmit in the Lord;" which phraſe carries in it three things.—Firſt,
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a motive to obedience. It is done to the Lord. And though through the froward and peevish humours of the husband, she may have no other encouragement to observe and obey him; yet to the conscientious wife this will be encouragement enough, that the Lord will accept and reward her obedience. Marriage being a type of our mystical union to Christ, he especially is concerned that the duties of that relation be performed, so as to bear some proportion to that spiritual mystery.—Secondly, a direction how to perform it; it must be as to the Lord. She must obey her husband not only with a design of pleasing him, but the Lord Christ. It is not the husband only that commands, but the Lord, and the wife must eye his sovereign authority, through the authority of her husband: and then it will appear, that though there be no necessity in what he requires, yet there is a necessity she should perform what is required.—Thirdly, the words import also a limitation of her obedience. The wife must submit and obey, but in the Lord, and as to the Lord; that is, only in lawful things, wherein by her obedience to her husband she may not offend against God. And excepting this, in all other cases the wife is absolutely bound to obey the will and command of her husband to the utmost of her power; even though he should abuse his authority, and command what is unnecessary and unfit, unless she can meekly persuade him to revoke his command. Nothing can excuse her obligation to obedience, but the unlawfulness or impossibility of what is enjoined.

(2.) Respect and reverence, Eph. v. 33, cherishing a high esteem of him, if not for his gifts and graces, yet at least, as her lord and head, superior to her by God's appointment; looking upon him as the person whom God has particularly chosen for her, as the fittest to be her head and guide, having a care to please him, endeavouring to conform herself to his inclination, having a joy in pleasing, and a grief in offending him, rejoicing when he rejoices, being sad when he mourns.

3. Helpfulness. To his soul, in furthering his graces, and wisely and opportunely admonishing him to his duty, at least by a holy and blameless conversation. To his body, by cherishing and tendering of it. To his

his good name, by endeavouring to augment and preserve it, reporting well of him, and silencing and convincing any scandalous rumours concerning him. To his estate; if she cannot bring in any thing to increase the stock, yet she ought prudently and frugally to manage what her husband entrusts her with, and not to waste it vainly and profusely. Nor ought she to alienate any thing from her husband, without his consent, either expressly declared, or upon good grounds supposed to be tacitly granted.

(4.) Modesty in apparel and behaviour, and being adorned with a meek and quiet spirit.

II. Duties of parents and children.---Children are to honour their parents.

1. By reverencing them, having an awful love and a fearfulness to offend, out of the respect they bear them. And this reverence is to be expressed, both in speeches and gestures. Their speeches must be full of respect and honour, giving to them the highest titles that their quality and condition will admit. They must likewise be very few, (for talkativeness is an argument of disrespect,) and very humble and submissive. They must comport themselves with all lowliness and modesty before them, in bowing the body, and shewing all other external signs of respect. They must not, upon any pretence of infirmity in them, despise them either in outward behaviour, or so much as in their hearts; but they are still to reverence them, and to bear with their infirmities, whether natural or vicious; and endeavour to hide and cover them like Shem and Japheth; and that in such a manner as even themselves might not behold them:

(2.) By obedience, active in whatsoever is not contrary to the will and law of God, passive in whatsoever they impose upon us that is so. Therefore we are to obey them in whatsoever honest calling and employment they will set us, and we ought not to enter into wedlock without their knowledge, or against their consent; but children have a negative vote, and ought not to be forced against their own will and consent. In unlawful commands, when it is necessary to refuse compliance; we should take care to do it in such a modest and
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respectful manner, that it may appear it is conscience only, and not stubbornness moves us to it; for children are not by such commands discharged from obedience, but only directed to chuse the passive part of it, and to bear their wrath and choler; yea, and their punishments too, with all patience and submission.

(3.) By remuneration and retribution, requiting the benefits we have received from them, so far as we are able, and they need. When they are fallen into poverty or decay, or otherwise require assistance from us, we are obliged liberally, according to our proportion, to afford it; but we are not to assist them in poverty and lowness of estate only, but in all their wants of what kind soever, whether weakness and sickness of body, decayedness of understanding, &c.

(4.) By hearkening to their good instructions, imitating their godly practices, and praying for them. Though good instructions be for the matter of it always to be embraced from whomsoever it shall proceed; yet when it shall come from a parent, it obliges us not only because it is good, but because it is authoritative: neither are we only to hearken to their counsel, but also to pray for them, and to imitate their holy examples. And therefore it is commended in Solomon, that he walked in the steps of his father, David.

Parents Duties, respect either the temporal or spiritual good of their children. As for their temporal good, they owe them protection and provision of necessaries and conveniences, according to the rank and degree in which the Divine Providence has set them. We are to nourish and sustain them, and to protect them from all incident evils; nor are we to provide for them only for the present, but according to our ability we are to take care for their future subsistence; and if we cannot leave them a patrimony, we are to leave them an art or calling, whereby through the blessing of God they may procure their own livelihood. And if we must place them out to a vocation, we must endeavour with all our prudence to fit it to their genius and inclination; still remembering, that if we piously design unto the work of the Lord, it should be those who are most pregnant, and whom God has endued with the greatest gifts for so high a ministration,

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In respect of the spiritual good of their children. They are to present them to holy baptism; to instruct and admonish them; to educate them in the fear and knowledge of God, to teach them the fundamental truths and principles of the christian religion, and in a manner most suitable to their capacity and discretion, and to form their wills, while they are flexible, to the love of piety and virtue. This way of instruction is; First, by reading to them or causing them to read the Scripture, and pointing out to them those observables, which are most agreeable to their age and apprehensions. Secondly, by catechising and instructing them in the grounds and principal doctrines of religion. A continued discourse is not so informing, nor does it fasten and rivet instruction into young minds so well, as Thirdly, by endeavouring to make them in love with duty, offering them rewards and invitations, and whenever they do well, encouraging them to go on.

Another duty of parents is to give good examples, to set before their children the copies and patterns of those virtues which they teach. Even a heathen satyrisk could say, *Maxima debetur puero reverentia*, We ought to reverence and stand in awe of children, that they see nothing vicious or dishonest by us, not so much for the shame of it, as the example. It is the boast and glory of children to be and do like their parents, and if they think it not a part of duty to imitate their vices, yet they cannot but conclude themselves secure from reproof and correction. If neither instructions, encouragements, nor good examples, will prevail; then correction and discipline is necessary, and becomes a duty. And let that first be tried in words, not in railing and foul language, but in sober, yet sharp reproof; but if that fail too, then use the rod. And let this correction be given in such a manner as may be most likely to do good, viz. Timely, not suffering the child to run on in any ill till it has got a habit, and become hardened by age or spirit against the fear and smart of correction; and moderately, not exceeding the quality of the fault, nor the tenderness of the child. Immoderate, ungoverned correction is so far from profiting children, that it often exasperates them, and makes them the more

stubborn and untractable, or else it only dispirits and stupifies them; and a sour, harsh, unkind behaviour will also produce the latter effect of dispiriting them. And therefore the Apostle has twice cautioned parents against this way of discipline, Eph. vi. 4, Col. iii. 21. Lastly, correction must not be given in anger; if it be, it will lose its effect on the child, who shall think it is corrected, not because it has done a fault, but because the parent is angry; whereas care should be taken to make the child as sensible of the fault, as of the smart.

After children are grown up, the parent is still to watch over them in respect of their souls; to observe how they practise the precepts which were given them, and accordingly to exhort, encourage, or reprove, as they find occasion.

Another duty of parents is to bless their children, (1.) By their prayers. They are by daily and earnest prayer to commend them to God's protection and blessing, both for their spiritual and temporal estate. (2.) By their piety, they are to be such persons themselves, as that a blessing may descend from them upon their posterity. Parents blessings have great influence on their children, so likewise have their curses, is oftentimes direfully fulfilled, not only to the ruin of the children, but the too late sorrow and repentance of the parents. Lastly, Parents should take heed that they use their power over their children, with equity and moderation, not to oppress them with unreasonable commands, only to exercise their own authority; but in all things of weight, to consider the real good of their children, and to press them to nothing which may not consist with that.

III. Duties of masters and servants.—A servant ought, where his choice is left him free, to chuse a faithful master, one that fears God, and will be willing to promote the spiritual good and salvation of his soul; and a master should use prudent care in the choice of his servants, choosing such as have ability to discharge their place and manage the affairs committed to them, and conscientiousness and piety, in doing faithful service, not to them only but to God, the common master of them both.

Servants

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

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Servants Duties. (1.) Obedience to all the lawful commands of his master, Col. iii. 22; even though they should be impertinent, or too imperious and tyrannical. (2.) A patient suffering their reproofs and corrections; yea, so patient, as not to answer again, Tit. ii. 9, though he has given no just cause for reproof and correction, 1 Pet. ii. 18, &c. but if innocent, calmly, and at fit seasons, to represent unto his master the justice of his actions, and the reasons that moved him to them; and if faulty, to amend the fault he is rebuked for. (3.) A reverential fear of his master, 1 Pet. ii. 12; which fear is to be expressed in their words and actions, by forbearing any clamours or irreverent mutterings in their presence, their words must be few and humble, giving them all those respectful titles that belong justly to their place and quality, by speaking well of them in their absence, concealing their infirmities; by comporting themselves with all the expressions of modesty and respect before them, and readily doing, not only what their masters shall command, but what they judge will be pleasing and acceptable to them, Psalm cxxiii. 2; striving not only to fulfil, but even to prevent their commands, by the readiness and respect of their obedience. (4.) Diligence in his master's affairs, fidelity and trust in what is committed to his charge, not defrauding him of the least value, Tit. iii. 9. Carefulness in preserving his estate, not wasting it by riotous living or negligence. (5.) Truth in all they say. (6.) Serving with a good will and in singleness of heart, not grudgingly, as of constraint, and with eye-service, but readily and cheerfully, as unto the Lord, Eph. vi. 5, &c.

Masters Duties. (1.) To use a prudent and discreet government, such as may maintain their authority, and yet not be tyrannical. Therefore it should be a master's care to demean himself gravely and awfully before his servants; his very countenance and comportment should be enough to beget reverence in them. Government consists in command and correction; but that which mostly tends to make them effectual is good example. A master ought wisely to enjoin his servants what they should do without rigor or revilings, nor yet should he prostitute his authority by submissive entreaties. There

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should be such an equal mixture of mildness with gravity, and love with authority, that the servant should not only be compelled, but inclined by it to obedience. But this wisdom in commanding respects not only the manner, but also the matter of the command. And as to this, he ought to command nothing but what is lawful, possible, and reasonable. Though a thing be not simply impossible in itself, but only to the servant, considering his inability or employments; or if it be hugely inconvenient, or prejudicial, or unseasonable, the master ought not in conscience or prudence to exact it. Neither should any of his commands be vain and impertinent, but he should have some swaying reason sufficient to satisfy his judgment and conscience, though perhaps not always to be communicated to the servant.

Correction ought to be used to stubborn and disobedient servants; but prudence must be the measure of what discipline is fit for them, according to their age, disposition, and the nature of their offence. A reproof will work more effectually on some, than stripes; and those of ingenious spirits will either be discouraged or exasperated by too rigorous usage. No correction is to be inflicted out of passion and revenge, but either for reformation and amendment, or for example's sake to terrify others from the same or the like offences. But be sure that the corrections be not immoderate, and too severe. Generally reproof is the best discipline, and if they will not be amended with that, though a sharper method be lawful, and in some cases necessary, yet the most prudent course is to discharge them.

(2.) Provision for the temporal and spiritual good of his servants. As to the first, he is bound to supply them with things necessary, according to the agreement and compact between them. He ought to provide food and raiment, or in lieu of any of these, faithfully to pay the agreed wages. As to the second, every master is to be a priest and a prophet in his own family, as well as a king. He is to instruct them in the will and laws of God, to rectify their errors and mistakes, to pray with and for them, to direct them in the way to heaven, and to walk before them in it by his holy and pious example. God has entrusted thee with their souls, and will require

require them at thy hands. What a heavy doom will pals on thee when God shall demand at thy hands the souls of thy servants or children, which have perished through thy default! Let not a day pass without its stated hours of prayers in your family, and allow them time to bestow on their souls in secret. Instruct those that are ignorant, reduce those that are enormous, admonish and rebuke with all authority those that are faulty, discard those that are contumacious and incorrigible. Let not a scorner and derider of piety and holiness remain within your doors, and be careful that both you and your family do strictly observe and sanctify the Lord's-day. Prepare your families by private duties for public, let none of them stay at home from the ordinances but on great and urgent necessity; take an account of their profiting by what they hear; be as careful to see your family well employed in the service of God on that day, as to see them employed in thy own service the other days of the week, therefore be not long nor unnecessarily from them.

Second, In the Church.

I. Duties of Pastors and their Flocks. Ministers should look to it that they be rightly called, that they do not thrust themselves into so sacred a function, unless they be duly set apart thereto. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God," Heb. v. 4. And God complains of those Prophets whom he had not sent, and yet they ran; and to whom he had not spoken, and yet they prophesied, Jer. xxiii. 21. They must have an inward call, which consists both in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and also in the inclination of their will to use them for God's glory, in this holy ministration. Now the gifts they should be endued with, are a competent knowledge in the truths of the Gospel, sanctifying grace, and an holy life and conversation.

Pastors Duties. (1.) To be good examples to the flock, 1 Tim. iii. iv. They must be exemplary both in themselves, and their families, Titus i. 7, 8, 1 Tim. iv. 12. They must be serious and circumspect in their conversation. (2.) A diligent and conscientious employing of their gifts and talents; they must be able
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and willing to teach, well-grounded in the knowledge and doctrine of Christ. They ought to be instant in season and out of season, 1 Cor. ix. 16, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Their doctrine should be sound, such as cannot be condemned, Titus ii. 1. It must have authority either from the express words of Scripture, or the analogy of faith, rationally deduced from Scripture. Profitable, not setting before the people unintelligible notions, of thin, airy speculations. Plain, and suited to the capacities of the hearers, as much as can be, without disgusting any;—grave and solid, not slovenly and too much neglected, nor yet too nice and sprucely drest;—powerfully, and with authority. 1 Tim. iv. 11. They must deliver God's message boldly. (3.) Other duties are hospitality, according to the measure of their estates, 1 Tim. iii. 2, Titus i. 8. Gravity in their discourse and all their converse, neither speaking nor doing any thing unseemly; a pious and assiduous care in visiting the sick, diligence in catechising and instructing the younger, in the principles of faith and religion.

II. Duties of the people. (1.) Obedience in being persuaded by their good advice and admonitions, Heb. xiii. 17. When they propound the will of God revealed in his word, or in cases not so clearly determined therein, do give their judgment as those who have found mercy to be accounted faithful, they may challenge our obedience to it, in the name of Christ; for we find, that in those particular cases wherein the Apostle had no express revelation from Christ, yet he prescribes to the Corinthians what he judges fit for them to do, and by that direction obliges their practice, not indeed simply and absolutely, yet so that in such circumstances as the Apostle supposes, they had sinned if they had done otherwise than he directed them. (2.) To honour their ministers, as their spiritual fathers, 1 Tim. v. 17. All must have that honour given them which is due to their function, but those who rule the flock well must have this honour doubled to them. Now this double honour is commonly taken for the honour of reverence, and the honour of maintenance. They are to be honoured and esteemed for their office and for their work's sake, and ought to have a competent and liberal maintenance,

tenance, such as may enable them to relieve the necessities of others, to provide comfortably for their own family, and to use hospitality in their houses.

Persons eminent in grace. Ought (1.) to beware that they do not despise their weaker brethren in their hearts, nor with a censorious austerity reject those whom God has received. They should beware of spiritual pride, which makes men envious towards those who excel them, and scornful towards those who fall short: for when men grow conceited of their own excellencies and attainments, they will be ready to condemn other men's duties as formal hypocrisy, and their sins as total apostacy. They will mistake the smoking flax for a reeking dunghill, and be forward imperiously to cast them out of God's family, though themselves were but lately received into it out of mere charity. The more eminent our graces are, the more need we have to pray and strive for humility. (2.) They should improve their grace to the benefit and advantage of others. Hath God endued thee with a clear and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel? Know that this light was given thee to diffuse and scatter abroad its rays about thee, to inform the ignorant, guide the doubting, confirm the wavering, resolve the scrupulous, reduce the erroneous, and convince the malicious opposers of the truth. Or has the Holy Spirit kindled in thy breast a flame of divine affections, and is it not to this end, that thou shouldst breathe warmth into the languishing desires of others, by holy conferences and spiritual discourses, illustrating the beauty of holiness, excellency of true piety in itself, and the reward it brings after it? Or hath God exercised thee with grievous trials and violent temptations? Wherefore is it, but that you should the better know how to succour those that are tempted, and by your own experiences counsel and comfort those who are ready to sink under their load? Expound to them the depths and methods of Satan, unravel his wiles and subtilties, 2 Cor. i. 4. Or if you are not so fit either for instruction or counsel: yet at least, let your graces be beneficial to others, by a holy and exemplary conversation. If your graces cannot shine through your gifts, yet at least let them shine through

through your life, that others seeing your good works may give glory to your heavenly Father.

Duty of others towards them. (1.) Highly to love and esteem them, 1 Job v. 1. To associate with them, make them their bosom-friends, their confidants and companions. (2.) To imitate their holy examples. If others outstrip you, mend your pace, endeavour to overtake them, tread in the same steps, and do your utmost to keep even with them: envy not their graces, but emulate them. But here be sure you set your pattern right; propound those to yourselves for examples, who have fixed principles and sober practises: who are grave and solid, and in all the duties that belong to a Christian conversation, labour to do them substantially rather than ostentatiously. And yet there is no man that walks so uprightly, but that sometimes he may step awry: and therefore be not led by a blind and implicit adherence to them, but continually eye the rule, and whereinssoever they forsake that, therein forsake them.

Third, in the Common-Wealth.

Magistrates and Subjects. Subjects owe to their Magistrates and Rulers, (1.) Honour and reverence. First, in their thoughts, looking upon them as the lively and visible image of God upon earth. The divine perfections are the highest object of our reverence; therefore as you would esteem and honour any for their wisdom or holiness, because there are some lineaments of the image of God, so you ought to reverence those to whom the Almighty has communicated his adorable power and authority; for this also is the image of God in them: yea, though they should bear no other resemblance to God, neither in his wisdom nor justice. Yet that authority alone with which they stand invested, challenges our respect and reverence, for in this at least they are like to God, and whosoever slights and despises them, slights and despises one of God's glorious attributes shining forth in them. We must not harbour any under-valuing and ill thoughts of them; but where Magistrates are just and merciful, wise and holy, we ought to give them the greatest reverence that can belong to creatures, and to esteem and respect them next unto God himself. Secondly, in our speeches, speaking
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what good of them we know, and prudently concealing their vices or infirmities. Beware that you do not by misinterpretation traduce the actions of your lawful Rulers, nor hearken to those who do. Thirdly, with our substance, when the necessity of their affairs, and public concerns call for supply. Tributes and public payments are theirs, when made so by law; for the rest is ours no otherwise than by the same law. And though sometimes the burthen may fall heavy, yet we ought freely and cheerfully to contribute. (2.) Obedience in performing their lawful commands; and where they are wicked and unlawful, in suffering what they threaten. (3.) Fervent and earnest prayer for them, 1 Tim. ii. 1.

Subordinate Magistrates. These should be men fearing God, men of truth, and hating covetousness, Exod. xviii. 21. Their chief duty is to see that the laws be executed according to their full intent without respect of persons, neither fearing to punish the rich, nor sparing to punish the poor, making no difference between one person and another, where the cause makes none. They should have that courage and firmness, which may make them as inflexible as the rule of justice itself is; neither being frightened by the power or threats of the great, nor softened with the cries of the mean, but moved only by the cause. They should be divested of all passions, private subjects, private interests and affections, and be impartial in the execution of justice upon the mightiest offenders, as well as the meanest; upon their dearest friends and relations, as well as upon strangers or enemies.

2. Persons excelling in the gifts of the mind, in knowledge, wisdom, &c. These ought to improve them to the good and advantage of others, to guide and advise for the benefit of mankind and the glory of God; for these gifts, though they are not sanctifying, may be very serviceable to the church. These, though they should possess such gifts without any sanctifying and saving graces, yet are very considerable men; and our duty is to esteem and reverence them, to love their excellencies and encourage their labours, to praise God for them, and pray for an increase of their gifts. How much

much more then, when their natural and acquired endowments are joined with sanctifying grace; and the love of the truth does as much possess their hearts, as the knowledge of it does their heads?

3. Aged persons. Another superiority which God has granted some over others, is that of old age, which is of itself reverend and awful, and we ought to give due respect to it, Lev. xix. 32, Isaiah iii. 5. A reverend awe before them is not only a point of manners, but part of a moral and express duty. And if such respect be due to them from others; they ought to reverence themselves, and by grave, prudent, and holy actions, to put a crown of glory on their own grey heads, Prov. xvi. 31.

4. Persons excelling in riches and honour. Their duty is to be humble towards their inferiors, knowing that these are only external goods, and to communicate to the relief of other's necessities, that they may be rich in good works, and make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. The duty of others towards them is to pay them all due respects, according to what God has bestowed on them, to acknowledge the riches of God in making them rich, and to endeavour to promote, as far as in them lies, the spiritual good of their souls. A rich man may be more universally instrumental either of good or evil than others can: therefore to win such a one to the faith, to preserve him stable in it, is a most charitable work: not only to their souls, but to the church of Christ, the affairs of which may be much advanced by such a man's wealth and interest.

Observe, That in all these mutual duties, it is no excuse for the one party to fail of the most conscientious and careful performance of what belongs to him, because the other does so.

Concerning the promise of long life added to the precept. We may observe, that whereas the free and genuine administration of the Gospel, promises eternal life and the joys and glories of heaven to believers, the old law runs generally upon earthly and temporal blessings; which must not be so understood, as if the promises of the law were only for these earthly concerns;

cernments; but because this procedure was most suitable to the whole system of that pedagogy, wherein God thought fit to discipline them by types, and to lead them unto the sun by shadows. But though these promises made to the Jews were thus typical, yet those figures were not altogether so figurative, as not to be properly understood and fulfilled. Though heaven were typified by Canaan, yet God's veracity would have suffered, if he had brought them to heaven, the true land of promise, and not given them their inheritance in the earthly Canaan. So likewise that God might be true to his promise, it is not enough that he rewards the obedient with eternal life, but his faithfulness stands obliged to prolong their temporal life to such a duration, as may be fit at least to make a type of the everlasting rest. Neither doth the more spiritual dispensation of the Gospel look on this blessing of long life as a thing below its cognizance, but propounds it as a promise of moment; though it be now divested of its typical use, and stands for no more than itself signifies. And therefore we find that the Apostle puts a value on this fifth commandment, for this very reason, that it is the first with promise, Eph. vi. 23. And the same Apostle tells us, that "godliness is profitable to all things, having the promises of this life, and of that which is to come." But since this life is nothing else but a preparative to eternity, neither it nor any thing in it can be called good, but only as it relates to our eternal state. And therefore all promises of earthly blessings must necessarily imply this condition; that they shall be literally fulfilled to us, if they may promote our eternal happiness; otherwise they would not be promises, but threatenings, and that which we apprehend a blessing, would indeed prove no other to us than a snare and a curse.

"VI. Thou shalt not kill."

This precept forbids all wrong and injuries to the person of another, considered naturally as he is in himself, and that in respect of his soul as well as his body; for both are included in his person. And therefore by the second general rule, the doing all possible good of

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every kind to the souls and bodies of men, is enjoined. But this is not all, for the law of God is spiritual and searches the heart; and therefore, as our Saviour himself explains this command, anger (in which is included every temper contrary to love) is likewise here forbid; and consequently love, or an universal benevolence, is the great duty hereby required. And, as the love of ourselves is to be the standard and rule of our love to others, for thus we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves; it follows that the regular love of ourselves is also implied in this command, the having an earnest, zealous concern for our own happiness and welfare, the doing all we can to preserve ourselves free and vigorous, to glorify God in our station, and carefully avoiding whatsoever may be injurious to our own souls or bodies: all fretting, vain grief, worldly sorrows, melancholy sin; and whatsoever may wound and hurt the soul in respect of its principal faculties of the understanding, will and affections, and in regard of its present and eternal happiness; all needless endangering of ourselves, self-murder, and whatsoever tends to injure our healths, or shorten our lives. Those who destroy themselves (whether their souls or bodies) do virtually and interpretatively destroy the whole world, because they destroy that fundamental law, which should regulate their love to their neighbours; and which is the stated rule, according to which they should endeavour after their welfare and preservation.

Sins forbid. Not only the actual sin of murder is here forbid, but according to the fourth general rule all degrees and causes of it; such as envy, which gave occasion to the first murder committed in the world, and is a foul vice that turns the happiness and welfare of others into our misery and torment; anger, for no anger is allowed but that which is directed against sin; and the word *ἀνὴρ* without a cause, in Matt. v. 22, is left out in many of the Greek copies; and it seems most agreeable to the context that it should be so; prejudice against, and the rash judging of others; hatred, malice, contempt, rejoicing at the fall of others, and every unkind thought harboured in the heart against our neighbour. Thus far respects the inward man. In regard of our outward acts, All

All injuries to the soul are forbid, such as causeless afflicting or grieving any one, drawing him into sin, which wounds and kills the soul, either directly by commanding of it, by counselling or advising to any wickedness, by enticing and alluring to it, as when we set before him the pleasure or profit he shall reap by it, by assisting and helping him either in contriving or acting it; or indirectly, by setting an evil example, by encouragement of sin, which we are guilty of when either by approving, or at least not shewing a dislike, we give him confidence to go on in his wickedness, by justifying and defending any sinful act of another, by bringing up any reproach on strict living, as those do who have the ways of God in derision.

Injuries to the body are forbid: such as duels, unlawful war, all ways of procuring abortion, revenge, maiming, stripes, wounds, persuading to drunkenness, or to any thing which tends to the shortening of life, setting persons at variance, stirring them up to anger and revenge, all hurt to the body and life of another, depriving him of his liberty; murder, which we are likewise guilty of when we command or counsel it to be done, or consent to it, when we conceal it, or if we are in authority, do not punish it.

All contemptuous, slighting, reviling, and reproachful language is likewise forbid, Matt. v. 22. And so are all contentions and quarrels, threatening, ill wishes or curses, and in general, whatsoever may prejudice the safety of our neighbour, or tempt us to see him perish, when it is in our power to rescue and relieve him. Unmercifulness even towards brute creatures, and cruel tormenting of them, not to satisfy our occasions and necessities, but our own unreasonable passions, may be reduceable as a sin against this commandment, for all acts of cruelty are so. We should be careful not vainly, or superfluously, or unnecessarily, or prodigally, to take away the life of the creatures; nor should we use their labour excessively, immoderately, or unseasonably, nor deny them their convenient food. We should abhor those sports that consist in torturing the creatures: and if either noxious creatures are to be destroyed, or creatures for food to be taken, we should do it in that

manner that may be with the least torture to the creatures; nor should we destroy those creatures for recreation-sake, that either were not hurtful, when they lived, or are not profitable when they are killed; ever remembering that though God has given us a dominion over the creatures, yet it is under the law of justice and moderation.

Every killing of a man is not murder, for there are several cases, wherein though one kill another, yet he is no murderer. As, (1.) In the execution of justice. Magistrates, and such who have a lawful power and authority, may and ought to put capital offenders to death; and if they do not, God will charge it upon them as their sin. Gen. ix. 6, "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." And again, Deut. xix. 21, "Thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life." And our Saviour's command not to resist evil, Matt. v. 39, only forbids private revenge, and not public. If we have in any thing suffered wrong, we ought to bring all our causes and complaints to the Magistrate, for into his hands hath God put the sword of justice, Rom. xiii. 4. Revenge is so sacred a thing, that none ought to intermeddle with it, but those whom God has appointed, for he has solemnly ascribed it to himself. Heb. x. 30, "Vengeance belongeth to me, and I will recompense, saith the Lord." And he hath constituted the Magistrate as his deputy in this work and office, and therefore he only ought to revenge by punishment proportionable to the nature of the crimes committed. So that to speak properly, it is only God and not man, that sheds the blood of wicked persons; for the Magistrate receives his commission from God, and doth it as his minister and servant.

2. In a just and lawful war against another nation, undertaken either for necessary defence against an unjust invasion, or for recovery of what is unjustly taken away, or for punishing some great injury or wrong. For where the cause is just, the manner in which we prosecute it is warrantable, the authority which engages us in it being rightly constituted over us, we may, when it is very necessary, lawfully take up arms, and

In a public war, right ourselves upon an injurious enemy; for what law is to persons of the same nation, that war is to persons of a different nation. We read that among the penitents that came to John the Baptist for instruction, when soldiers also came, he did not bid them lay down their arms, or their commissions, but gave them directions how they should demean themselves in their calling; which he would not have done, if he had thought their calling itself unlawful. Neither did our Saviour, when he so highly commended the Centurion for his faith, rebuke him for his profession, but extols him for taking the ground and argument of his faith from his military calling, Luke vii. 8, and John xviii. 36. When Christ was examined concerning his kingdom; he answers, "My kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." Which greatly implies, that though wars and fightings were not proper means to advance the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ, yet if the methods of his humiliation had permitted him to assume the royal sceptre, his followers and servants might lawfully have fought to defend his claim and title.

3. In the necessary defence of a man's person, when he is suddenly assaulted by those who attempt to take away his life, and hath no other means left him to secure it. In this case, there being no possibility of having recourse to a magistrate for protection, every man is a magistrate, to himself, but it is not enough the danger be impending, but it must be instant and present, and no way of escape visible, so that a man's life is in all probability lost, if he does not stand upon his own defence; for in all dangers that are only threatened and approaching, we ought to trust Providence, and to use our best diligence to work our escape from them. Yea, we find, Exod. xxii. 2, that God allows the killing of a thief, if he breaks into a man's house by night: but not so if he attempted it by day. And possibly the reason of this law might be, because when any comes upon another in the night, it might be presumed that he takes the advantage of the darkness not only to steal his goods, but to mischief his person. And therefore

God allows it as lawful to kill such an one, as a part of necessary defence. From which I think we may safely conclude, that it is lawful also to kill those who attempt on our goods, when we have reason to fear they may likewise design on our persons.

(4.) In accidental blood-shedding, when there is no intention or purpose of doing it, as when in hewing of wood, the axe should slip, and by chance kill a man, Deut. xix. 5. And the like. But here we must look to it, that we be employed about lawful things; otherwise, if we be doing that which is unjustifiable, which accidentally proves to be the death of another, this cannot be excused from murder. There ought also to be a due care taken to avoid any mischief that may happen upon doing of a lawful action, by giving notice to those who come in the way of danger, and forbearing to do it whilst they are there. But in all cases where the death of another is intended, let it be upon never such violent and sudden passion, though there were no propensed malice borne them before, it is in conscience and in the sight of God, wilful murder.

Duties required. 1. In respect of the affections.

(1.) We are to have a sincere kindness for all men, to wish all good to others in respect of their souls and bodies; to be earnestly desirous that all men may arrive at that holiness here, which may make them capable of eternal happiness hereafter; and in regard to their bodies, we are to have the same tenderness for them as for our own, and whatsoever we apprehend as grievous to ourselves, we must be unwilling should befall another. This love will secure the mind not only from envy, malice, censoriousness, and rash judging, which have been already mentioned; but also from pride and haughtiness, dissembling; and this is the love we are commanded to have, such as is without dissimulation, Rom. xii. 9; and from mercenariness and self-seeking. This charity must be extended to our greatest enemies, and if it be sincere, will produce in us, (2.) Meekness, that is, a patience and gentleness towards all, in spite of all provocation to the contrary. (3.) Compassion towards all the misery of others, and joy in their prosperity.

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2. In respect of the actions. This charity must be expressed in actions. (1.) By humanity and courtesy of behaviour towards all. There is so much respect due to the very nature of mankind, that no accidental advantage of wealth or honour which one man hath above another, can acquit him from that debt to it, even in the person of the meanest. (2.) By endeavouring the comfort and refreshment of others, to give them all true cause of joy and cheerfulness, especially when we see any under sadness or heaviness, then to labour by all christian means to cheer their troubled spirits. (3.) By a hearty zeal to save the life of eternal souls. We should propound to ourselves in all our converse with others, Those who have such abilities and opportunities as may make it likely to do good, should use them for instructing the ignorant, reprehending and admonishing the sinner, confirming and encouraging the weak. Every spiritual want of another should give us occasion of exercising some charity. Or if by reason of our mannishness, unacquaintedness, or other circumstances, we shall, upon sober judging, think it vain to attempt any thing ourselves, we should endeavour to find out some other instrument, by whom it may be successfully done. And if after all our endeavours, the obstinacy of men do not suffer themselves to reap any fruit from them, yet we should continue to exhort by good example, and cease not to importune God for them, that he will draw them to himself. (4.) By a hearty zeal to procure, promote, and preserve their temporal health, safety, liberty, happiness, and lives; that they may be better able to serve and love God. We are to compassionate their pains and miseries, but also to do what we can for their ease and relief. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, harbour the stranger, visit the sick and imprisoned, and endeavour the enlargement of the latter in cases where it is prudent. We are to defend the lives of others, in all these instances wherein self-defence is lawful, to relieve the oppressed, and in general to lay hold of all occasions of doing good offices to the bodies of our neighbours. We may sometimes find a wounded man with the Samaritan, and then it is our duty to do as he did; or we may find an innocent person

person condemned to death, as *Susannah* was; and then we are with *Daniel*, to use all possible means for their deliverance.

“VII. Thou shalt not commit Adultery.”

1. Adultery properly taken, is a sin, committed between persons, the one, or both of them, married unto another. It is a most heinous sin, but on the married person's side most inexcusable and intolerable. *Gen. xxxix. 9*, It is called a great wickedness against God, even on the unmarried person's part. And *Levit. xx. 10*, *Deut. xxii. 22*, the temporal punishment assigned to it is no less than death; the same punishment that belonged to murder, and greater than was inflicted for theft. And though such persons may escape the judgment of men, either through the secrecy of their wickedness, or the too gentle censures of the law; yet they shall not escape the righteous judgment of God, nor those everlasting punishments that he hath prepared for them in hell. *Heb. xiii. 4*, “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”—There are two things that make adultery so exceeding heinous. The luxury and incontinency of it, in letting loose the reins to a brutish concupiscence, and yielding up the body to pollution and the soul to damnation. The injustice of it being a deceit of the highest and most injurious nature; for it is a violation of a most solemn vow and covenant, and so adds perjury to unfaithfulness; and it is the source and cause of a spurious birth, bringing in a strange blood into the inheritance of lawful children, whereby this unfaithfulness becomes theft, as well as perjury.

But though adultery be alone mentioned in the command; yet according to the general rules laid down in the beginning, all other kinds of uncleanness are forbid under the name of this one gross crime. For the law of God is perfect, and as all manner of chastity both in our thoughts, words, and actions, is there enjoined us; so likewise whatsoever is in the least contrary, and prejudicial to a spotless chastity, and inviolate modesty, is hereby forbid. And therefore,

2. This command forbids fornication; which properly is the sin of uncleanness committed between two single

single persons. And though it hath not some aggravations that belong to the other, yet it is an abominable sin in the sight of God. 1 Cor. vi. 9, "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, shall ever inherit the kingdom of God." And in Rev. xiv. 8, xxii. 15, you may see, that fornicators are strung up with the vilest, and most infamous sinners. The Apostle reckons up this as one of the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 19, and exhorts us to a careful mortification of it, Col. iii. 5.

3. This command forbids all voluntary pollutions of either sex; all immoderate use of the marriage-bed, and all unseasonable use of it; for there are seasons when God and nature separate the man and wife, in this respect; and in any of these times, it is forbid the husband to converse with the wife; as you may see, Lev. xv. 9.

Immodest behaviour between husband and wife, such as incites themselves, by mutual dalliances for pleasure's sake, and awakning the sleeping passions which nature had laid to rest, is another abuse of marriage license, and forbid in this command.

4. Here likewise are forbid all unnatural lusts, and incestuous mixtures, or uncleanness between those who are related to each other, within the degrees of kindred specified, Lev. xviii.; whether the kindred be by affinity or consanguinity. And the nearer any persons are so related to us, the greater the abomination if we approach unto them; whether it be with pretence of marriage, which in this case is null and void, or without any such pretence.

5. Polygamy is forbid. And though God seemed to connive at this sin in the holy men of old; yet was it unlawful from the beginning, even then, when the necessity of increasing the world might seem to plead for it. And therefore the prophet Malachi, chap. ii. 15, refers us to the primitive institution of marriage to shew the obliquity of this practice. And the Apostle hath commanded, 1 Cor. vii. 2, "Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband."

6. All these things that may be incentives to lust, and add fuel to this fire, are likewise forbid in this command; all impurities of the eyes, of contact, of lewd and obscene speech; all immodest spectacles, wan-

ton actions, impure company, songs, books, and pictures; all lascivious dresses, dances, and plays; all idleness and luxurious diet, and whatsoever else may kindle, either in ourselves or others, any unchaste affections.

7. Because the law is spiritual; therefore it not only forbids the gross outward acts of filthiness, but the inward uncleanness of heart; all unlawful contemplations and ideas, and evil concupiscences. For it is not enough to refrain unchaste desires from breaking forth into act; but we must also refrain our hearts from entertaining any such degrees, Matt. v. 27, 28.

“ VIII. Thou shalt not steal.”

This command requires honesty and uprightness in our dealings. A virtue immediately founded upon that first practical principle, Matt. vii. 12, “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.” Both God and nature have set up this standard in our consciences: and usually there needs no other judge of our actions towards others, than by comparing them with what in the like cases we would think just to be done towards ourselves. It may be we are all partial to ourselves; and whilst we look only that way, we may possibly seek all advantages, though to another’s detriment. But both Reason and Religion teach us to put ourselves in their stead, and then to manage all our transactions with them, as we ourselves would judge just and reasonable, were their condition ours: and therefore when you deal with another, you should first be both parties to yourself. As for instance, a servant should consider with himself what respect he would require were he in the same circumstances with his master. Children should consider what duty and obedience they would expect were they parents of children: subjects what honour and submission they might demand were they magistrates; and so in any other relation. And when they have thus seriously pondered it in their own thoughts, let them perform the same duties to others: for it is a never-failing rule for the direction of our practice, that what thou judgest due to thyself, were thou in another man’s condition, is certainly as due to him in his own; and if thou actest not accordingly,

accordingly, thou betrayest a great deal of selfishness and sinful partiality. This is a rule applicable to all affairs; and there is scarce one occurrence of a man's life, but he may regulate himself in it according to this direction: and indeed there is scarce need of any other. Whatsoever thou hast to transact with thy brother, though perhaps one may spy advantages upon him, and such, as if thou shouldst take, possibly he might never know, or be able to redress; yet take thy conscience aside, and seriously ask, Whether thou couldst be content to be so dealt with thyself; and if not, whatsoever the temptation be, or how much soever thou mightest gain by hearkening to it, reject it with scorn, as that which would induce thee to violate the first principle of common honesty. Therefore let me once again recommend it to you, (for indeed I cannot press it too often,) that you would frequently set this golden rule before your eyes, to do nothing to any other person, which, were you in his capacity, and would think unjust to be done to yourselves, and whatsoever you would expect from others as your due, were you in their places, and they in yours, to perform the very same to them: for otherwise you cannot but condemn yourselves in your actions, whilst you do that which, upon this supposition, you cannot but be convinced is unjust, and which yourselves would expect should be yielded you by others. This is a dictate of nature and right reason; this is the sum of the law and the prophets; and all these various precepts which are given us in the Scripture for the conduct of our lives are but as so many lines that meet all in this centre; and if we apply it to each particular command of the second table, we shall find them all founded upon this, and to be interpreted by it. We are required to honour superiors, to abstain from murder, from adultery, from theft, from false accusations, from coveting what rightfully belongs to another; and all this according to the same measure that we would have others to perform these duties to us. So that self, which is now the great tempter to wrong others, were it governed according to this universal maxim, would be the greatest defender of other men's rights. The most visible violation of this natural

tural law is by the sin of theft forbidden in this commandment.

THEFT is an unjust taking or keeping to ourselves what is lawfully another man's. He is a thief who with-holds what ought to be in his neighbour's possession, as well as he who takes from him what he hath formerly possessed.

All theft pre-supposed a right: for where nothing doth of right pertain to me, nothing can be unjustly taken or detained from me.

Now here, 1. Certain it is that God is the great Lord and Proprietor both of heaven and earth, and of all things in them. Psal. xxiv. 1, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." And Psal. l. 10, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "By him, and of him are all things; and for his will and pleasure, they are and were created."

2. This great and absolute Lord hath granted to man a large charter of the world; and when he had taken an exact inventory of those goods, with which he had furnished this great house, the universe, then he set a man to live in it as his tenant, and freely gave him the use of, and dominion over, all the works of his hands. Gen. i. 28, "Replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over all the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over every thing that moveth upon the earth." So the Psalmist, Psal. cxv. 16, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men." A large and regal gift, whereby he hath made over all sublunary things to men, reserving to himself the sovereignty and supreme lordship of all, and requiring only from man the homage and payment of obedience. Yet,

3. This large charter gave no particular property to any; neither if man had continued in this happy and innocent estate would there have been any need of *meum* or *tuum*, or any partition of these earthly possessions, but the common blessings had been employed in common; and all things which covetousness and corruption now ravin after, would have been as promiscuously enjoyed and used as the common light and
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air, and each particular man's share in those blessings would have been sufficient and satisfactory. But,

4. Sin entering into the world, their desires grew immoderate after these earthly enjoyments, and their attempts to attain them injurious to others; so that it became necessary to prescribe bounds to them, and to divide among them what before lay in common among all; that each man knowing his assigned portion, might rest satisfied with it, and be restrained from the unjust invasion of another's right. And,

Lastly, This could no otherwise be effected but by human laws, by mutual compact and agreement, declaring what should be accounted every man's right: So that it is the law which is the great determiner of property; and there is nothing mine or thine farther than this assigns it to us. Indeed equity must sometimes interpoise to moderate the letter of the law; for in some cases should we rigorously prosecute our right, and insist upon every punctillio that we may call our due; this, although it would not be unjust, yet it would be justice turned into gall and wormwood; it would be a breach and violation of the law of Christ, and of charity, which requires us rather to part with our own, in small matters, than to be vexatious or contentious in recovering or defending it.

Thus you see how all right and property first came into the world: A general right by the donation of God, a particular right by the sanction of laws, allotting to each man his portion, which to invade or usurp is injustice or theft.

Whence it follows, that where there is no society in occupation of any part of the earth, the right accrues to the first possessor; and where things are found which appertain to none, they fall to the first seizer; for there can be no theft committed where there is no precedent title. If any therefore should providentially be cast into some uninhabited part of the world, that general charter that God hath given unto mankind of possessing the earth, empowers them to seize it as theirs; and they may lawfully make use of the blessings of it in common, till by mutual consent they divide to each their portion; but after such a partition made, to use the

same liberty is no longer lawful, but theft and robbery.

Thus you see what theft is: and that this law of God, prohibiting us to steal what is another's, doth presuppose a law of man, which makes property, and causeth things to become either our's or another's.

Now, there are many kinds of thefts.

1. The highest, is that which is committed against God, by sacrilege. Now sacrilege is an alienating from God whatsoever he has appropriated to himself, or dedicated to his honour and service. Indeed, the alienating of what hath been given to superstitious or idolatrous uses, cannot be justly branded with this black mark of sacrilege; for it was not so much given to God as to ignorance and superstition: and therefore our ancestors have done well, in dissolving those nests and cages of unclean birds, that were so numerous and burthenome in these kingdoms; but withal in my judgment, would have done much better if they had converted their revenues to some public use, either for the benefit of the church, or common-wealth, rather than to their own private gain. But where any thing is indeed consecrated to God, and set apart for his worship and service, it is no less than sacrilege, to alienate any part of this to secular uses, or to detain it from that use. And of this God himself grievously complains, Mal. iii. 8, 9, "Will a man rob God?" As if it were a sin so heinous that it is hardly to be supposed any man would be guilty of it: What! Not to allow that God his share among them, who had liberally afforded them all things to enjoy! "Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Certainly those things which are appointed for the worship and service of God, whether they be originally by divine right or not, yet they cannot be alienated or detained without involving the persons, or the nation, that doth thus, in a most direful curse: for this is no other than robbing God of his right. And how far these nations may be concerned in this sin, and how deeply sunk under this curse, I leave to the consideration of those who have

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no other interests to sway their judgments, but that of piety and honesty.

2. Theft is committed against men by an unjust seizing or detaining what of right belongs to them; and this may be done either by fraud or force. And therefore our Saviour, in reciting the commandments, mentions them both, Mark x. 19, "Do not steal, defraud not." This is a sin that God hath threatened with many severe curses.

One kind of theft is oppression, and unreasonable exaction; and this especially is the sin of superiors towards their inferiors, taking advantage either of their weakness, or their necessity, to impose unequal conditions upon them, and such as they cannot bear without their detriment or ruin, contrary to that law which God gave his people, Levit. xxv. 14. "If thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought at thy neighbour's hands, ye shall not oppress one another." Thus those who sell their lands to others at too hard a rate, so that the laborious tenant cannot subsist by his industry; those that let out money at a biting interest, or rigidly exact it from insufficient persons; great ones who fright the meaner into disadvantageous bargains, and force them through fear to part with what they enjoy, at an under price; these, and other like, though they may not be condemned by human laws, which give too much permission to men to make the utmost advantage of their own, yet they are guilty by the law of God, and their sin is no less than oppression; which is a sin hateful both to God and man. The prophet Micah, chap. iii. 2, 3, calls it "a plucking off their skin from them, and their flesh from off their bones, and chopping them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh for the cauldron." All unmercifulness and hard dealings with others, is a kind of theft; for the law of nature, and much more the law of charity, binds thee so to deal with others, that they may have no cause to complain of thee to God, and in the bitterness of their spirit to imprecate his wrath and vengeance upon thee.

Another kind of theft is detaining from another what is his due, either by equity or compact: and how many are there whose luxury is maintained upon the intrusted

goods of others, 'whilst the poor creditor hath no other satisfaction but good words, and scarce any thing to live upon but his own tears and sighs. And how many withhold the hire of the labourer, who when he hath wearied out himself in their service, is denied that small reward which he requires for his necessary refreshment? Yea, not only denying it, but even deferring it beyond the time, is a kind of theft and oppression. Deut. xxiv. 14, "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy; at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it: for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee." Yea, in all thy bargains and agreements, though they be never so much to thine own prejudice, thou art bound to stand to them, unless the other will voluntarily release thee from the obligation. For this is one of the characters given of a godly person, Psal. xv. 4, "He that sweareth, and covenanteth to his own hurt, and changeth not;" but upon demand is ready and willing to fulfil his agreement: How much more heinous and abominable is it, when they have already received the full value of their compact, unjustly to withhold what they have agreed to give; which is no better than to take their labour or their goods from them by violence and robbery; yea and in one respect worse, in as much as it adds falsehood to stealth.

Another kind of theft is in buying and selling; and this is a very large and voluminous deceit: for the subtilty of men have found out so many artifices to defraud one another, that to recount them is almost as hard as to escape them. Here comes in the false weights, and the false measures, which are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xi. 1. False and counterfeited wares, overcommending or undervaluing of goods, for advantage, and many other unjust contrivances, which men's consciences can better suggest to them than any discourse. The Apostle hath sufficiently cautioned and threatened such men, 1 Thes. iv. 6. "Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of such." Believe it, there is a day coming, when the false weights shall be themselves weighed,

weighed, and the scanty measures measured by a standard that is infallibly true. Possibly thou mayest deal so cunningly that those whom thou over-reachest can have no advantage against thee, nor right themselves by law : but remember that the great Judge will avenge them upon thee at the last day. Then all accounts shall be balanced, and so much found resting due, which thou shalt certainly pay ; though not to those whom thou hast wronged, yet to the justice of God, who is the great and universal creditor.

There are many other kinds of thefts, as prodigality in wasting what should satisfy the just demands of others, taking of wages and rewards for what we do not endeavour conscientiously to perform, selling that which we have no right to dispose of, or things which ought not to be sold, taking bribes for injustice, or rewards for injustice. But I shall not particularly insist upon these, and many others that might be mentioned.

And thus we have seen what the negative part of this precept is.

But because every negative implies in it a positive, let us see what is the duty required from us ; and that is two-fold.

1. That every one of us should have some calling.
2. That all of us should be contented in that condition of life, wherein the Divine Providence hath set us.

“Thou shalt not steal :” Therefore every man ought to have a calling, whereon he may comfortably subsist, and by his labour and industry provide at least necessities for himself and family : for he that provideth not for his family, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Some there are who live without any calling at all : such are like idle drones, and consume the labours of others, lazy vagabonds, to whom the greatest charity would be correction ; who only serve to devour misplaced alms, and defraud the truly poor of their relief ; yea, if I would rank with these, a company of superfluous, debauched gentlemen, I think I should do them no great injury ; such I mean who are neither serviceable to God nor their country, who have nothing of true worth and gentility in them, but are

the most unprofitable members in the commonwealth, and good for nothing but to kill and destroy one another. I know there is no necessity for manual labour to those whom God hath liberally endowed with earthly blessings; but yet they may have a calling, and within their own sphere, may find employment enough to take up their time and thoughts; and such as may make them the most beneficial men on earth, and truly honoured and loved by others; for by their authority, their example, the ampleness of their revenues, and the dependance that others have upon them, they may be as influential to promote goodness and virtue, as too commonly they are to promote vice and villainy; but yet withal, if they should condescend to some stated vocation, it would be no disparagement to their gentility; for certainly Adam was as much a gentleman, and had as large demesnes, as any of them, and yet God thought fit to place him in Eden, that he might dress and keep the garden.

But as some have no employment, so others have an unlawful employment: such whose only work is to instruct vice, and incite men to it. And how many such are there who live by encouraging the wickedness of others, and continually make use of all the allurements that might entice to evil, and recommend debauchery, first to the fancy, and then to the will and affections.

Others have indeed an honest and a lawful calling, but they are negligent and slothful in it. Now sloth tendeth to poverty, Prov. vi. 10. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth;" drawing nearer and nearer to thee, by soft and silent degrees; "and thy want as an armed man;" who though his pace be slow, by reason of the weight of his armour, yet his assaults are more irresistible and destructive. And poverty tempts to theft, Prov. xxx. 9. "Lest I am poor and steal;" and therefore this command which forbids theft, must by consequence enjoin labour and industry in those lawful callings wherein the Divine Providence hath set us; according to that of the Apostle, Eph. iv. 28. "Let him that stole steal no more; but

but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth ;” and so by his industry, of a thief, become a benefactor and an almsgiver.

2. It requires us to be contented with that portion of earthly comforts which our heavenly Father allots us. Heb. xiii. 5, “Be content with those things ye have.” And certainly he that is not content with what God allows him, lies under a grievous temptation by unjust courses to carve out his own condition, and to invade the properties of others ; let us therefore check this ripening temper betimes, and not think that we have too little, and others too much ; but whatsoever God affords us, let us account it sufficient provision, and a child’s portion ; and although it be but food and raiment, neither the most delicate, nor the most sumptuous, yet “having food and raiment, let us therewith be content,” as the Apostle exhorts us, 1 Tim. vi. 8. Let us look upon all other things as superfluous, or indifferent, and not murmur, although we should never obtain them ; for whatsoever is needful to thy subsistence, God’s providence and blessing upon thy industry will furnish thee with it ; and what is not needful to this is not worth thy envy and repining.

And so much for the exposition of this Commandment.

I shall only subjoin a word or two to those who are conscious to themselves that they have wronged others of what was their due, and either withheld, or taken from, what by law and equity belonged to them : let such know that they are bound to make them a perfect satisfaction, by making an entire restitution, if the thing they have stolen be still extant, and in their hand ; or if not, then by making a full and satisfactory compensation. Yes, be the thing great or small, more or less, though it should seemingly tend to the loss of thy credit, by acknowledging such a wrong or visibly tend to thy impoverishing or undoing to restore it, yet notwithstanding thou art bound to restore every farthing of what thou hast wronged and defrauded thy brother. Nor is it enough to confess the sin before God, and to beg pardon at his hands, but thou must likewise render

to man what is his due, and what thou unjustly keepest from him; whether it be his by thy promise, or by his own former possession, as ever thou hopest to obtain pardon for thy sin from the mercy of God; yea, and thou art bound likewise to the very utmost of thy power to make him recompense for all the damage which he hath in the mean time sustained by thy unjust withholding his right from him, or else thou shalt never obtain pardon; and the reason is, because as long as you detain what is another's, so long you continue in the commission of the same sin; for unjust possession is a continued theft; and certainly repentance can never be true while we continue in the sin of which we seem to repent; and thy repentance not being true, pardon shall never be granted thee.

But you will say, "What if those whom we have wronged be since dead, how can restitution be made unto them?"

I answer, in this case thou art bound to make it to their children or their near relations: to whom it is to be supposed what thou has wrongfully detained would have descended. Or if none of these can be found, nor any to whom of right it may belong, then God's right takes place, as he is the great Lord and Proprietor of all things. And thou oughtest, besides what thou art obliged to give of thine own, and bestow it on the works of charity and piety: yet withal, thou hast great reason to bewail that thou hast so long deferred the restitution of it to the right owner, till now thou hast made thyself incapable of doing it.

This possibly may seem a hard lesson; and doubtless it is so in a world so full of rapine and injustice; but yet as hard as it is, this is the rule of christianity, this is the inflexible law of justice; and without this, you live and die without all hope of obtaining pardon by continuing in your sins impenitently.

"IX. Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour."

The former Commandment provided for the security of every man's property, this provides for the preservation of his good name, and it forbids,

1. The

1. The sin of lying.
2. Detraction and slander.
3. Soothing and flattery.

1. This command prohibits lying; a sin that comprehends under it all other violations of this precept; for slander and flattery are both of them lies, different only in circumstance.

I shall first shew you what a lie is: and then the heinousness and aggravation of this common sin.

1. A lie, according to St. Austin's definition of it, is a voluntary speaking of an untruth, with an intent to deceive. And therefore in a lie there must be these three ingredients.

1. There must be the speaking of an untruth.
2. It must be known to us to be untruth. And
3. It must be with a will and intent to deceive him to whom we speak to. And therefore,

1. Parables and figurative speeches, are no lies: for neither as to the drift and scope of them are they falsehoods; nor yet are they spoken with an intent to deceive, but rather to instruct the hearers.

2. Every falsehood is not a lie; for many times men speak that which is not true, which yet they believe to be true, and so are rather deceived than deceivers: and perhaps are far from any intention of imposing upon the credulity of others.

3. A man may act contrary to what he before said, if the circumstance of the thing be altered, without being guilty of lying. We have frequent examples of this in the Scripture. Thus, Gen. xix. 2, the angels tell Lot, that they would not come into his house, but would abide in the street all night; yet upon his importunity and earnest intreaties they went in with him. And thus St. Peter, with some heat, refused that Christ should wash his feet, John xiii. 8, "Thou shalt never wash my feet;" but when he was instructed in the significancy of this condescension of our Saviour, not only permits, but intreats him to do it. So likewise in all things of such a nature we may lawfully change our words upon the change of our minds; and upon the inducement of some circumstances that were not known

or

or considered by us, we may, without the imputation of lying, do otherwise than we before declared.

And thus you see what a lie is, and what is not a lie: the sum of all I shall contract into this description of it. A lie is a falsehood, either real, or supposed so by us, spoken purposely, and with an intention to deceive another. And therefore neither falsehoods, nor figurative speeches, nor the change of our mind upon the changing of circumstances, can be chargeable with that foul and scandalous sin of lying.

Now lies are usually distinguished into three kinds: the jocular, officious, and pernicious lie.

1. There is a jocular lie; a lie framed to excite mirth and laughter, and deceive the hearer, only to please and divert him. This, though it may seem very harmless, yet truth is such an awful thing, that it ought not to be contradicted; no, not in jest: and God reckons it up as a sin against the Israelites, Hosea vii. 3, that "they made the king and princes glad, or merry, with their lies."

2. There is an officious lie, which is told for another's advantage, and seems to make compensation for its falsehood by its use and profit: but yet neither can this excuse it from being a sin; for since a lie is evil in itself, let the advantage that accrues by it be never so great, we ought not to shelter either ourselves, or others, under that rotten refuge. That stated maxim holds universally true in all cases, "We ought not to do evil, that good may come thereof." And therefore, although thine own life, or thy neighbour's, depends upon it; yea, put the case it were not only to save his life, but to save his soul, couldst thou by this means most eminently advance the glory of God, or the general good of the church, yet thou oughtest not to tell the least lie to promote these great and blessed ends.

3. There is a pernicious lie, a lie devised on purpose for the hurt of my neighbour, which is the first and the most heinous sort of all. It shews a heart full of malice, when this passion works out at the mouth in slanderous reports and false accusations. All lies are in themselves sinful, but this the vilest and most abominable of all.

There

There remains two other violations of this Commandment; the one by slander and detraction, the other by flattery. I shall speak first of that common sin of slander and detraction, a sin that is triumphant in our age, and if I should likewise say in this place, I think I should not myself be guilty of it by that censure. Indeed slander and detraction seem somewhat to differ: for slander properly is a false imputation of vice; but detraction is a causeless, diminishing report of virtue. The one traduceth us to be what we are not, the other lessens what we really are; and both are highly injurious to our good name and reputation.

When a man's life and actions are so blameless that even malice itself is ashamed to vend its venom by base slanders, lest it should appear to be malice, and the reproach light upon the reporters, then it betakes itself to those little arts of nibbling at the edges of a man's credit, and clipping away the borders of his good name. Thus when any are so just as to give others their due commendation, either for learning, or wisdom, or piety, or any other perfection, either of grace or nature, you shall have those who lie in wait to cut other men's esteem, and if they see it so strongly fortified by the conspicuousness of it, and the general vote of the world, that they dare not attack the whole, then they lurkingly assault part of it; and what they cannot altogether deny they will endeavour to diminish: "'Tis true, such a man is, as you say, learned and knowing; but withal so knowing as to know that too. He is wise, but his wisdom is rather politic than generous; and his designs are biassed with self-ends. He is charitable, but his charity seems too indiscreet; or if you did not proclaim his good works, he himself would. He is pious and devout indeed, poor man, after his way, and according to his knowledge." Thus by these blind hints they endeavour either to find, or to make a flaw in another man's repute.

Now slandering may be either in judicial process, or in common and ordinary converse.

1. In judicial process, and then it is truly and properly false witnessing; when thou risest up against thy brother in judgment, and attestest that which thou knowest

knowest to be false, or which thou art not infallibly assured to be true; and this sin is the more heinous and dreadful upon the account of two aggravating circumstances that attend it.

(1.) Since usually all actions in law and judgment, concerning either the person or the estate of thy brother, by a false witness, thou not only wrongest him in his name and reputation, but in one of these, and so art not only a slanderer, but a thief or murderer, Prov. xi. 9. "A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour." And by so much the more odious is thy crime in that thou pervertest the law, which was intended to be a fence to every man's property, and turnest it against itself, making it the instrument of injustice and cruelty.

(2.) Since usually all judicial proceedings exact from the witnesses a tremendous oath, solemnly taken by the name of the great God of heaven, to give in a false testimony is not only to be guilty of slander, but of perjury too: Yea, and let me add one thing more to make it a most accumulated wickedness: such a false testimony is not only slander and perjury, but it is blasphemy too: for what else is it but to bring the most holy God, who is eternal truth, to confirm a falsehood, and a lie? What can be a higher affront to his most sacred Majesty than this? For a sworn witness is therefore accepted, because he brings God to be a witness; and wilt not thou tremble, O wretch, to cite God to appear a witness to that which a thousand witnesses within thee (I mean thy own conscience) do all depose to be false, and so to transfer thy injustice, and rapine, and bloody murder upon him, and shelter them all under the shadow of his veracity and faithfulness?

2. There is a slandering of others in our ordinary converse. And this is done two ways, either,

(1.) Openly and avowedly, in their presence, and to their faces: and that is also two-fold.

Either by reviling and railing speeches. And thus Shimei barked at David, 2 Sam. xvi. 7. "Come out thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial." And I wish that our streets and houses did not, to their great disgrace, echo with such clamours; wheresoever it be
found

found it is a disparagement to human nature, a sin against civil society, and argues men guilty of much folly and brutishness; and I am sure is a transgression of that express command of the Apostle, Eph. iv. 31, 32. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

There is another way of open avowed slander, and that is by bitter taunts, and sarcastic scoffs: and this is usually an applauded sin among the more refined sort of men, who take a pride in exposing others, and making them ridiculous, thinking their own wit never looks so beautiful as when it is dyed in others blushes. But this is a most scurrilous and offensive way, wherein certainly he hath the most advantage; not who hath most wit, but least modesty. These kinds of tauntings are sometimes such as the Apostle calls cruel mockings, and reckons them up as one part of those persecutions the primitive christians endured, Heb. xi. 36.

(3.) There is a more secret conveyance of slander, and that is by backbiting, whispering, and carrying up and down of tales, like those busy tongues, Jer. xx. 10, that would fain find, or make themselves some employment, saying, "Report, and we will report;" and so false and slanderous rumour shall, like the river Nile, spread over the whole land, and yet the head of it be never known; it shall pass on to the indelible blot and infamy of thy neighbour, and the first author of it lies hid and concealed in the crowd. Against this sort of men Solomon, in his book of Proverbs, is very severe; and there is no one wickedness which that excellent compendium of wisdom and morality doth more inveigh against than this of whispering, Prov. xviii. 8. "The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, they go down into the inmost parts of the belly;" intimating that the wound such a tongue makes is deep, but hid and secret, and therefore the more incurable. And Prov. xvi. 28, "A whisperer separates chief friends." He is, as it were, the devil's interpreter between them both, and goes to one, and buzzeth in his ear what such an one

said of him, although perhaps it be altogether false, and when he hath by this means got some angry speeches from him, goes and reports them back to the other, and so by his wicked breath blows up the coals of strife and dissensions between them. And therefore the wise man tells us, Prov. 28, 29, "Where no wood is the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer the strife ceaseth." The Apostle cautions the Corinthians against this sin, 2 Cor. xii. 20. "I fear, lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, lest there be among you debates, envyings, strife, backbitings, whisperings, tumults;" and he reckons it up among the black catalogue of those crimes, for the which "God gave up the heathen to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, despiteful, inventors of evil things," Rom. i. 29, 30. Now one of the chief artifices of this sort of men is to calumniate strenuously, according to that old maxim of the devil, "Slander floutly, and somewhat will stick:" For though the wound may possibly be healed, yet the scar will remain, and be a blemish to a man's reputation as long as he lives.

There is another kind of detraction, and that is when a man divulgeth those imperfections and faults which are truly in his neighbour without being called or necessitated to do it: for sometimes truth itself is detraction, when it is spoken with an evil design, to the prejudice of another. Indeed if thou be duly called to witness in judgment, or if the crime be such as ought not to escape unpunished, or if he remain contumacious after more private admonition, in which case our Saviour commands us to tell the church; or lastly, when it is for the safety and security of another, who might else be wronged, should we conceal from him the mischiefs which others intend him, in these cases it is both lawful and expedient to make known the faults of thy brother. But then be sure that thou do it not with any secret delight, but with that true sorrow of heart, that may evince to all the world, that nothing but conscience and a sense of thy duty, enforced thee to publish
his

his shame, which thou shouldest be willing to hide at the price of any thing but sin, and thine own shame. But alas, it is strange to consider how we delight in other men's sins, and are secretly glad when their mis-carriages give us an occasion to disgrace them. How many are big with such stuff, and go in pain till they have disburdened themselves into the ears of others! And some are such ill dissemblers of their joy, that they do it with open scorn and derision. Others are more artificially malicious, and with a deep sigh, and a down-cast look, and a whining voice, and an affected slowness, whisper to one; "Alas, did you not hear of such a mis-carriage by such an one?" And then whisper the same thing to another, and a third; and when they have made it as public as they can, hypocritically desire every one to keep it secret, for that they would be loth their neighbour should come to any disgrace and trouble about it. Believe it, Sirs, this, though the matter you report be never so true, is mere detraction, because it is done to no good end. And therefore we find that Doeg, though he told nothing but the truth, 1 Sam. xxii. 9, 10; yet he is by David challenged as a liar and slanderer, Psal. lii.

I shall finish this subject with giving you,

1. Some brief rules which through the grace of God may be serviceable to keep you from this common sin. And then,

2. Shew you how you ought to demean yourselves under the lash of slanderous tongues.

1. If thou wouldest keep thyself from being a slanderer of others, addict not thyself violently to any one party or persuasion of men. For part-taking will beget prejudice, and prejudice is the jaundice of the soul, which represents other men and their actions in the colour our own disease puts upon them. And indeed we have all generally such a good conceit of ourselves, that it is very hard to have a good esteem for others who are not of our judgment, and of our way. And this makes us first very willing to hear some evil of them. For because we think what we do is good, we cannot cordially think them good who do not judge and act as we do; and so our minds are prepared to

entertain reports against them from others, and then to spread them abroad ourselves. And I cannot but impute to this the great uncharitableness of our days, wherein love and brotherly kindness lie murdered, under the violence of different persuasions, and different modes, and divers ways of worshipping one and the same God. Hence all those lying rumours and lying wonders that one party invents to beat down the other: both suffer from each others envenomed tongues; and between both, truth suffers, and charity perisheth. For shame, O Christians! Is this the way to promote God's cause, or Christ's kingdom? Doth he, or it, stand in need of your lies? Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? Shall his honour be maintained by the devil's inventions? I shall not speak partially: but wheresoever the fault lies, there let this censure fall, that it is a strong presumption of a weak and bad cause, when the refuge and support of it are lies.

2. If thou wouldest not be guilty of slander, be not busy in other men's affairs: keep thine eyes within doors, and thy thoughts at home: enquire not what others say, nor what others do, but look to thine own affairs, and guide them with discretion; thou hast work enough at home, within thine own heart, and in thine own house: and if thou art careful to manage that well, thou wilt scarce have either time or inclination to receive or divulge bad reports of others: be frequent in reflecting upon thine own miscarriages, or thy proneness to fall into the same or greater faults; when thou hearest or knowest of any sin committed by another, look backwards upon thine own life. Canst thou find no blots in thy copy? Is the whole course of thy life fair written upon thy conscience? If not, how canst thou with any modesty upbraid thy brother with his miscarriages, when thou thyself hast been guilty of the like or greater. Methinks our shame for our own sins should be a covering to our brother's; and when we ourselves are guilty, we should not be so foolish as to reproach ourselves by reproaching him; otherwise, to eclipse and darken his good name, is but as when the moon eclipseth the sun, her own darkness and obscurity is made the more remarkable by it.

3. Or

3. Or if God by his restraining grace hath kept thee from those wickednesses into which he hath suffered others to fall, look inward, view and search thine own heart, thy corrupted nature, yea, and there thou shalt find those, yea, and far greater abominations than those, like beds of twisted serpents, knotting and crawling within thee. Say with thyself, How can I reproach him, who hath but copied forth mine own nature? How can I expose his infamy, who hath but done what I have much ado to keep myself from doing? Possibly the same temptation might have prevailed over me too, had God let it loose upon me. I owe my preservation not to any difference that was between us, but only to the free grace of God: by this it is that I stand, and shall I reproach him for falling, who should also myself have fallen, were I not strongly upheld by another? Thus, I say, by reflecting on ourselves we shall be withheld from being injurious in our censures, and in our reports of others; we shall hardly divulge the real miscarriages, much less accuse them with false ones.

4. If you would not be guilty of slander, listen not to those who are slanderers and detractors: lend not your ears to those who go about with tales and whispers, whose idle business it is to tell news of this man and another. For if these kind of flies can blow in your ears, the worms will certainly creep out at your mouths; for all discourse is kept up by exchange: and if he bring thee one story, thou wilt think it incivility not to repay him with another for it: and so they chat over the whole neighbourhood, accuse this man, and condemn another, and suspect a third, and speak evil of all. I wish the most of our converse were not taken up this way, in recounting stories of what passed between such and such, when all is to no other end but to bring an evil report upon them. Now, if any such backbiters haunt thee, who make it their trade to run up and down with tales and news, give them no countenance, listen not to their detractions, but rather sharply rebuke them, and this will either drive the slander from them, or the slanderer from thee. Prov. xxv. 23, "The north wind driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue."

5. Be not easy to entertain evil surmises against others. For if thou begin to suspect evil, the next thing is to conclude it, and the next to report it. This suspicion is a strange shadow that every action of another will cast upon our minds; especially if we be before-hand a little disaffected towards them. Thus very dreams increased suspicions against Joseph in his brethren: and if once a man be out of esteem with us, let him then do what he will, be it never so virtuous, suspicion will still be the interpreter. And where suspicion is the interpreter of men's actions, slander and detraction will be the comment upon them. Indeed suspicion is always too hasty in concluding; and many times our jealousies and distrusts, upon very small occasions, prompt us to conclude, that what we have thus surmised is certainly come to pass; and so we report that confidently for truth which we never saw acted, but only in our own fancies.

These are the rules to keep you from being guilty of slander against others.

If any are guilty of raising an ill report against you, observe these following directions, how you ought to demean yourselves in this case.

1. If the reproach they cast upon thee be true and deserved, though they perhaps have sinned in disclosing it to the world, yet make this use of it, go thou and disclose it in thy most humble confessions to God; yea, and if thou art called thereto, give glory to God by confessing it before men. Men possibly may upbraid thee with it, but by this course God will forgive thee without upbraiding thee.

2. If thou art falsely charged with that which never was in thine heart, yet improve this providence to stir thee up to pray the more fervently, that God would for ever keep thee from falling into that sin with which others slander thee; so shall all their reproaches be thrown merely into the air, and fall at last heavy upon their own heads.

3. If any unjustly slander thee, revenge not thyself upon them, by slandering them again. I must confess this is a very hard lesson, and requires almost an angelical perfection to perform it well. We read in the
epistle

epistle of St. Jude, that when Michael and the devil contended about the body of Moses, it is said that the holy angel durst not bring a railing accusation against that wicked spirit, but only said, the Lord rebuke thee. And so when men of devilish spirits spew out their slanders, and broach all the malicious accusations that their father, the great accuser, hath ever suggested unto them, return not slander for slander, for so the devil would teach thee to be a devil; but with all quietness and meekness, desire of God to rebuke their lies and calumnies, and by all prudent means vindicate thyself, clear up thine integrity, and make it appear that though the archers have shot at thee, and sorely grieved thee with their arrows, even bitter words, yet still thy bow remaineth in its strength. What saith the Apostle? 1 Pet. iii. 9, "Render not evil for evil, or railing for railing." And indeed whosoever doth so, seeks only to heal a wound in his name, by making a much deeper one in his conscience.

4. When thou art falsely aspersed, appeal to the all-knowing God: retire into the peace and refuge of thine own conscience, and there shalt thou find enough for their confutation, and thy comfort. Know that a good name is in the power of every slanderous tongue to blast; but they cannot corrupt thy conscience to vote with them. Possibly it is only thy grace that offends them; if so, glory in it: for the reproaches of wicked men are the best testimonials that can be given of a christian. In a strict and holy conversation there is that contradiction to the profane world, as at once both convinceth and vexeth them, reproves and provokes them. And if thou dost reproach them by thy life, wonder not if they again reproach thee by their slanders. Be not solicitous how they esteem of thee: it is miserable to live upon the reports and opinions of others; let us not reckon what they say, but what reports our own consciences make; and if a storm of obliquy, do at any time patter upon thee, how sweet is it to retire inwards to the calm innocency of our own hearts? There, a thousand witnesses will tell us we have not deserved them. How comfortable is it to remit our cause to God, and to leave our vindication to him for
whose

whose cause we suffer reproach? They may possibly persuade others to believe their calumnies: but God, who searcheth the heart, knows that we are injured; and he is hastening on a day wherein he will clear up our righteousness, and then the testimony of a good conscience shall put ten thousand slanderers to silence.

The third sin against this commandment is flattery, which is quite an opposite extreme to the other.

1. There is a self flattery. And indeed every man is (as Plutarch well observed it) his own greatest flatterer; and however empty and defective we may be, yet we are all apt to love ourselves, perhaps without a rival, and to be puffed up with a vain conceit of our own perfections, to applaud and commend ourselves in our own thoughts, and to think that we excel ourselves in what we have; and what we have not, we despise as nothing worth. From this abundance of a vain heart break out boastings, contemning others, a presumptuous intruding into those employments which we are in no way able to manage. Learn therefore, O christian, to take the just measure of thyself. Rather let it be too scanty than too large; for this will make thee proud, and arrogant, and undertaking; and by exercising thyself in things too high for thee, thou wilt but spoil whatsoever thou rashly venturest upon. If thou art at any time called or necessitated to speak of thyself, let it rather be less than the truth, than more: for the tongue is of itself very apt to be lavish when it hath so pleasing a theme as a man's own praise. Take the advice of Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 2, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."

2. There is a flattering of others; and that either by extolling of their virtues; or what is worse, by a wicked commendation even of their vices. This is a sin odious to God, who hath threatened to cut off all flattering lips, Psalm xii. 3. But especially it is most detestable in ministers, whose very office it is to reprove men for their sins: if they shall daub with untempered mortar, and sew pillows under men's elbows, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace, only that they may lull them asleep in their security, they do but betray their
souls,

souls, and the blood of them God will certainly require at their hands.

“Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Manservant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any Thing that is thy Neighbour's.”

We are at last arrived to the tenth and last precept of the moral law. The sin here prohibited is concupiscence, or an unlawful lusting after what is another man's. For since God had in the other commandments forbidden the acts of sin against our neighbour, he well knew that the best means to keep them from committing sin in act, would be to keep them from desiring it in heart; and therefore he who is a Spirit imposeth a law upon our spirits, and forbids us to covet what before he had forbidden us to perpetrate. It is true, that other precepts are spiritual likewise, and their authority reacheth to the mind, and the most secret thoughts of the heart. For our Saviour, Matt. v. accuseth him of adultery that doth but lust after a woman, and him of murder that is but angry with his brother. And it is a most certain rule, that whatsoever precept prohibits the outward act of any sin, prohibits likewise the inward propension and desires of the soul towards it. But because these are not plainly and literally expressed in the former commands, therefore the infinite wisdom of God thought fit to add this last command, wherein he doth expressly arraign and condemn the very first motions of our hearts towards any sinful object. And whereas before he had commanded us not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to slander; now in the last place, for the greater security, he commands us not so much as to harbour in our hearts any desire towards these. So that this tenth commandment is the bond that strengthens and confirms the second table. For because all our inward actions take their first rise from our inward motions and concupiscence, there is no such way to provide for our innocency as to lay a restraint upon these.

Evil concupiscence or desire is the first-born of original sin, the first expression of that corruption which
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hath seized on us, and on all the wretched posterity of Adam. For in original sin, besides the guilt which results from the imputation of the primitive transgression to us, there is likewise an universal depravation of our natures, consisting in two things.

1. In a loss of those spiritual perfections wherewith man was endowed in his creation. And this is the defacing of the image of God, which was stamped upon our nature in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness: and as a consequent upon this,

2. In a violent propension and inclination to whatsoever is really evil, and contrary to the holy will and commands of God. And this is the image of the devil, into which man by his voluntary apostacy hath transformed himself. Now this inclination to what is evil is properly the concupiscence forbidden in this commandment. For the soul of man being an active and busy creature, must still be putting forth itself in actions suitable to its nature. But before the fall, man enjoyed supernatural grace, though in a natural way, which enabled him to point every motion of his soul towards God: but forfeiting this grace by the fall, all his actions now, instead of aspiring to God, pitch only upon the creature. And this becomes sin unto us, not merely because we desire created good, (for this is lawful) but because we desire it in an inordinate manner; that is, without desiring God. And thus the soul not being able without grace, and the image of God, to raise its operations to God, pitched upon what it can, viz. low, sinful objects, to the neglect and slighting of God, and the great concerns of heaven. And this in the general is that inordinate disposition of the soul which is here called coveting or concupiscence.

There are four degrees of it.

1. There is the first shadow of an evil thought, the imperfect embryo of a sin before it is shaped in us; and these the Scripture calls the imaginations of the thoughts of men's hearts. Gen. vi. 5, "God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually:" that is, the very first figment and flushing of our thoughts is evil and corrupt: indeed some of these are injected by the devil. Many times he assaults even

even God's children with horrid and black temptations, and importunately casts into their minds strange thoughts of questioning the very being of God, the truth of the Scriptures, the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, and such other blasphemous, hideous, and unshapen monsters, against the very fundamentals of religion, for the truth of which they would willingly sacrifice their very lives, as a testimony to them. These indeed are not their sins, although they are their great troubles and afflictions; for they come only from a principle without them, so long as they are watchful to abhor and resist them, and to cast those fiery darts of the devil back again in his face. But there are other first motions arising in our hearts towards those sins, which are more pleasant to our sensual inclinations: these, as soon as ever they begin to stir in our breasts, are truly sins, and do in their measure pollute and defile the soul. For the soul of man is like a clear mirror, upon which if you only breathe, you sully it, and leave a dimness upon it; so truly the very first breathings of an evil thought and desire in our souls sully their beauty, and dim their lustre, and render the image of God less conspicuous in them than it was before.

2. A farther degree of this concupiscence is, when these evil motions are entertained in the mind with some measure of delight. When a single object offers itself, there is a kind of inward pleasing, that affects it with delight, and begets a kind of sympathy between them; that as in natural sympathies, a man is taken and delighted with an object before he knows the reason why he is so; so likewise in this sinful sympathy that is between a carnal heart and a sensual object, the heart is taken and delighted with it, before it had time to consider what there is in it that should so move and affect it. At the very first sight of a person we many times conceive some more particular respect for him than for a whole croud of others; so upon the very first glimpse of a sinful thought, there is something in it that commands a particular regard, that unlocks our very souls before we have leisure to examine why.

3. Hereupon follows assent and approbation of the sin in the judgment; blinded, and forcibly carried away by

by the violence of corrupt affections. The understanding is the great trier of every deliberate action, so that nothing passeth into act which hath not first passed examination there. Whether this or that action is to be done, is the great question canvassed in this court; and all the powers and faculties of the soul wait what sentence will be here pronounced, and accordingly proceed. Now here two things usually appear, and put in their plea against sin, God's law, and God's advocate, conscience. The law condemns, and conscience cites that law: but then the affections step in, and bribe the judge with profit, or pleasure, or honour, and thereby corrupt the judgment to give its vote and assent to sin.

4. When any sinful motion hath thus gotten an allowance, and pass from the judgment, then it betakes itself to the will. The judgment, for a decree, approves, and therefore the will must now resolve to commit it: and then the sin is fully perfected and formed within, and there wants nothing but opportunity to bring it forth into act.

And thus you see what this concupiscence is, and the degrees of it; viz. the first bubblings up of evil thoughts in our hearts; our complacency and delight in them, the assent and allowance of our judgment, and the resolution of our wills, each of these are forbidden in this commandment; but if the sin proceeds any further, it then exceeds the bounds of this commandment, and falls under the prohibition of some of the former.

Thus much concerning evil concupiscence in the general: but here is mention likewise made of several particular objects of it. Thy neighbour's house, his wife, his servants, his cattle, (under which are comprehended all sorts of his possessions;) and all is included under the last clause, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's: So that to desire or take from him either his life, or his good name, or his virtue, this is covetousness, as well as a desire to take from him his temporal possessions.

I shall close up all with some practical improvements.

1. Learn here to adore the unlimited sovereignty of the great God. His authority immediately reacheth to the soul and conscience, and lays an obligation upon
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our very thoughts and desires, which no human laws can do. It is but a folly for men to intermeddle with, or impose laws upon, that of which they can take no cognizance: and therefore our thoughts and desires are free from their censure any farther, than they discover themselves by over acts. But though they escape the commands and notice of men, yet they cannot escape God. He seeth not as men see, neither judgeth he as men judge; the secrets of all hearts are open and bare before his eyes. He looks through our very souls, and there is not the least hint of a thought, not the least breath of a desire, stirring in us, but it is more distinctly visible to him than the most opacious bodies are to us. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men," Psal. xciv.

11. And his law, like his knowledge, reacheth the most secret recesses of the soul, searcheth every corner of the heart, judgeth and condemns those callow lusts which men never espy: and if these find harbour and shelter there, condemns thee as a transgressor, and guilty of eternal death, how plausible soever thy external demeanor may be. And therefore,

2. Content not thyself with an outward conformity to the law, but labour to approve thine heart in sincerity and purity to God, otherwise thou wastest only the outside of the cup, when within thou art still full of unclean lusts. This was the corrupt doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, that the law reached only to the outward man; and although they entertained and cherished wicked desires, and evil purposes in their hearts, yet as long as they did not break forth into outward crimes, they were not to be imputed to them. And this St. Paul confesseth, that whilst he was trained up in pharisaical principles, he did not understand the inward motions of lust to be sin. But alas! This is but gilding over a dry and rotten post; which, though it may look beautiful to men, yet when God comes to examine it, will not abide the fiery trial. Thou art as truly a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, in God's sight as if thou shouldst actually kill, or steal, or wallow in the open acts of uncleanness. Indeed most men herein grossly delude themselves; and if they can but refrain

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from the outward commission of sin, they very seldom reflect upon their heart-lusts, which like deep ulcers rankle inwardly, and perhaps grow incurable, when all the while they may be skinned over with a fair and in-offensive life. Although the heart boil with malicious, revengeful, lascivious thoughts, yet they usually dispense with these. But deceive not yourselves, God is not mocked, nor can he be imposed upon by external shews; neither will he judge of thee as others do, or as thou thyself dost: I know it is a very difficult thing to convince men of the great evil that there is in sinful thoughts and excuses, and therefore very difficult to persuade them to labour against them. For because they are of a small and minute being, therefore men think they carry in them but small guilt. Every man that hath but a remnant of conscience left him, will beware of gross and notorious crimes, that carry the mark of hell and damnation visibly stamped upon their foreheads; such as he, that can without reluctance commit them, must needs own himself the offspring of the devil. But for nought, a notion, a desire, a thing next to nothing, this certainly I may please myself withal. By a malicious purpose I wrong no man; and what so great evil then can there be in this? It is true, wert thou only to deal with men, whom immaterial things touch not, there were no such great evil in them. But when thou hast likewise to do with an immaterial and spiritual God, before whom thy very thoughts and desires appear as considerable as thy outward actions, then know that these, as slight and thin beings as they are, fall under his censure, and will fall under his revenge hereafter.

Now were this persuasion effectually wrought into the minds of men, were it possible they should indulge themselves as they do, in vain, frothy, unclean, malicious thoughts and desires? Were it possible they should so closely brood on these cockatrice eggs, which will bring forth nothing but serpents, to sting them to eternal death? Were it possible they should delight in rolling a sin to and fro in their fancy, and by imagining it, make the devil some recompence for not daring to
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commit it? Certainly such men are altogether unacquainted with the life and power of true grace, when, as those sins which they dare not act, yet they dare with pleasure contemplate, and dally within their imaginations.

Turn therefore your eyes inward; bewail and strive against that natural concupiscence which lodgeth there; and never content thyself that thou hast dammed up the streams of thy corruptions from overflowing thy life and actions, till thou hast in some good measure dried up the fountain of it.

3. See here the best and the surest methods to keep us from the outward violation of God's laws, which is to mortify our concupiscence. And therefore the wisdom of God hath set this commandment in the last place, as a fence and guard to all the rest; thou shalt not covet, and then certainly thou shalt not kill, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor bear false witness, but be kept pure from all outward defilements of the flesh, when thou art thus cleansed from the inward defilements of the spirit. For, from these it is that all the visible sins of our lives and actions have their supply. And therefore saith our Saviour, Matt. xv. 19, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemy. Observe that he puts evil thoughts in the front, as the leader of all this black regiment; for out of this evil treasure of the heart, men bring forth evil things; and all the fruits of the flesh, the grapes of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah, receive their sap and nourishment from this root of bitterness. It ought therefore most deservedly to be the chief care of every Christian to lay the axe to this root, and to purge and heal this fountain that sends forth such corrupt streams, to keep his heart clean from sinful thoughts and affections, and then his life will be clean. And therefore God very pressingly requires this. Jer. iv. 14, "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" And let me add, that unless we make this our chief care, unless we do most solicitously observe this last commandment, all our care in ob-
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serving the former will be utterly vain; not only in respect of our acceptance and reward with God, but as to any good issue and effect. All other endeavours will be as successless as to attempt the cure of an ulcerous body without purging it, where the corruption will quickly break forth again; or to attempt the emptying a pond that hath many springs still rising up in the bottom of it, which will soon grow as full as ever it was.

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